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WITH THE PASSAGE of the President's gold bill events are expected to move rapidly toward definite devaluation and the creation of a machine to handle the government's two-billion-dollar stabilization fund. The most pressing problems created by these monetary maneuvers are international. The purpose of the stabilization fund is admittedly to check any appreciation of the dollar on the foreign exchanges, just as the purpose of the British Exchange Equalization Account is to hold down the value of the pound. It is hinted that some effort is even now under way to reach an agreement on dollar-sterling stabilization. It is to be hoped that this is true. If some such step is not taken, and taken promptly, it is hard to see how a disastrous monetary war can be averted. To hold the dollar down to a sixty-cent level, which is apparently the President's intention, will necessitate heavy purchases of gold and foreign currencies, while England presumably will be making every effort by similar means to prevent a result which would produce a pound worth about $5.30. A cheap dollar has obviously a deflationary effect on world prices and one which will be both resisted and resented in Europe. We may expect retaliation through currency depreciation and additional barriers to trade in the form of tariffs and quota restrictions. The only alternative is the prompt negotiation of an agreement with England to stabilize at a level reasonably satisfactory to both. That this will involve some measure of sacrifice on the part of each is not to be doubted. The hope is that both nations will soon see that immediate competitive advantage is not as important as international stability, the restoration of confidence, and an end to the devastating methods of economic warfare now in use between countries that profess friendly political relations.

AFTER MONTHS of inaction Attoney-General Cummings has decided to proceed against the aluminum trust. He has publicly declared his belief that the Mellon-controlled Aluminum Company of America is "a monopoly, at least in the producing field." That it is in fact the most perfect and complete monopoly in the country hardly needs argument. The late Senator Thomas J. Walsh was convinced of this. Upon accepting President Roosevelt's invitation to become Attorney-General, he informed close friends that he would take action at once against the aluminum trust and other monopolies. Nor would he have entered the contest unprepared, for he had devoted months to a study of the Aluminum Company. The Mellon interests doubtless were relieved when Senator Walsh's death was announced. They have shown in recent months by their attitude toward the proposed NRA code for the aluminum industry that they still consider themselves above the government. They would write their own code since no one else had any significant interest in the industry. The NRA was apparently disposed to accept this point of view, and for a time at least was insisting only that the code contain the safeguards for labor set forth in Section 7-a of the Recovery Act. The few independent fabricators in the industry fought back, however, and as a result the code is still in the formative stage. Unhappily, the independents themselves are divided. Those who import their raw materials from abroad do not want to be required to make known their production costs either to their smaller rivals or to the trust. But whatever happens to the aluminum code, it is gratifying to know that the Department of Justice has at last decided to move against the aluminum trust.

THE REPORT of the Administration's interdepartmental committee on the regulation of the security markets is a half-baked offering compounded of public-spirited intentions and some useful recommendations, but devoid of real substance. It opposes incorporation and all direct public regulation or control of the exchanges, but urges that they be licensed by the federal government. Through the power of a Federal Stock Exchange Authority to withhold or revoke these licenses it could indirectly control the methods of exchange operation. But the committee has sidestepped where it should have blazed a new trail. Speculation is the central evil of the security markets, and the unorganized "over-the-counter" markets are almost as large and important as the exchanges. The authors of the report have confined their proposals to the organized exchanges. The tools of speculation—margin buying, short selling, pool operations, and venal publicity, both in and out

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of the exchanges—call for drastic limitation. The knotty and prickly question is: How can it be accomplished? The members of the committees have confessed inexcusable failure—considering the nature of their assignment—by laying all these problems on the door step of the proposed Federal Authority with only tentative suggestions as to how they should be met. The committee confesses that it "has not found any method of controlling" the unorganized markets. Its report has obviously been hurriedly rigged and launched on the troubled waters of a highly controversial subject with too much sail and too little ballast. It is to be hoped that the forthcoming reports of the Senate Banking Committee and the Twentieth Century Fund, both of which have been digging for facts for many months, will supply the missing weight and serve as the basis for intelligent and vigorous legislative action.

FURTHER CONFIRMATION of our "good neighbor" policy may be found in the recognition by the United States of the republic of El Salvador. In December 1931, its President, Araujo, was replaced by Vice-President Martinez, who has governed the country peaceably since that time. Pursuant to a report made by two State Department representatives, Jefferson Caffery and H. Freeman Matthews, the United States declined to recognize the new government on the ground that its origin had violated Article II of the Central American treaty of 1923, which, instigated by our State Department, sought to withhold recognition of any government born of revolution. That El Salvador had made a specific reservation to Article II, had in fact rejected it, was given no weight. The treaty, which has since been abandoned by both Costa Rica and El Salvador, is a relic of the policy of domination of our smaller neighbors carried on during the presidencies of Taft, Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. Secretary Hull is to be congratulated for throwing it into the discard. Another sign of a new deal for Latin America is the retirement from our foreign service, after relegation to Czecho-Slovakia, of Francis White, for some years head of the Latin American Division of the State Department, later Assistant Secretary of State, and recently an active candidate for the ambassadorship to Cuba. *Time* recently recorded that "Career-diplomat White . . . expected to be better off in a Manhattan banking house with South American business." That would seem a logical continuation and culmination of Mr. White's public service.

OPPOSITION to the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence waterway—as *The Nation* said in its issue of December 27—is in part, at least, a masked attack by the power interests of New York State. They are afraid that the electric development of the St. Lawrence River, which is part of the project, will break the monopoly upon which they have fattened unless they can maintain their control over distribution. It is too optimistic to say, as some have said, that the completion of the St. Lawrence project would automatically give the northeastern section of the United States a vast new source of cheap power. The Power Authority of the State of New York would be able to develop electricity, but under existing law it could not sell it direct to the consumer and hence could not dictate rates advantageous to him. For several years legislation has been sought at Albany giving municipalities the right to buy and distribute electricity, a power which is essential if rates are to be controlled in the interest of the consumer. The Republican legislators, who their own party leader in the State charges are under the thumb of the utility companies, have repeatedly blocked the needed law. Last year with a small Democratic majority in the State Senate, Governor Lehman hoped to get an enabling bill through, but was betrayed by members of his own party. He has renewed his recommendation to the present session, and every member who fails to support the bill should be held personally responsible as an enemy of the peoples' interests. Fearing that they cannot indefinitely boss the legislature at Albany, the utility companies have this winter made a flank attack at Washington, where they have tried to defeat the entire waterway project, although concealing their real purpose by basing their opposition nominally on navigational aspects of the scheme. A strong manifestation of public sentiment, both at Washington and Albany, is needed to obtain action of the right sort.

THE NON-AGGRESSION PACT signed by Germany and Poland has more significance than would appear at first glance. While it must be welcomed as a minor step toward stability and peace in Eastern Europe, it also must be recognized as endangering the French system of alliances. The principal allies of France—Poland and the Little Entente states—have maintained the most intimate military and political relations with Paris, for, so long as France remained the strongest military power on the Continent and the outspoken champion of the status quo created by the Treaty of Versailles, these countries naturally felt that their very existence depended upon French support. However, they have few commercial or other economic contacts with France; instead, they move within the German-Austrian-Hungarian economic orbit. If to this attraction of common economic interests should be added the fact that Germany has gained, or is gaining, the upper hand in a military sense, the eastern countries would be tempted as a matter of self-defense to come to terms with Berlin. That the trend in that direction has already started is indicated by the growing strength of the anti-French party in Bucharest, the increasing disposition of the Czecho-Slovakian government to take a more "reasonable" attitude toward the Hitler regime, the renewed talk in Little Entente capitals of the need for rapprochement among all Central and East European states, including Germany, and now by the peace treaty between Poland and Germany, two countries which have been enemies for years. It would be easy to overemphasize the present importance of these various developments, but they do at least show which way the wind is blowing in certain European capitals.

FRENCHMEN may not take politics more seriously than Americans but at least they take them more personally. Probably we are no less sensitive to the corruption of government by business than the French, but we are not given to equally vehement and immediate resentment. Thus Americans are at a loss to understand the agitation in France over the Stavisky revelations. We have had worse political-commercial scandals in this country in recent years—the dealings of Fall with Sinclair and Doheny, for instance—but there have been no riots in consequence. Possibly the strategy of the founding fathers in establishing the national

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capital apart from the country's metropolis is one reason. Certainly our fixed term of office for elected executives is another. With the ministerial system, as in France, it is not only possible to force out unwanted officials at once, but it is practically necessary to do so if action is to be taken at all. Hence the reason for immediate and vociferous popular demonstrations. Stavisky was a Pole who several years ago was arrested for selling worthless securities. He escaped from the police in a way which led to some suspicion that his captors were not too keen to hold him. Nor did the subsequent failure to apprehend him show much zeal. When the municipal pawnshop at Bayonne failed recently and it turned out that Stavisky, under another name, had been managing it, he was again pursued, but either he committed suicide, as the police say, or, as others charge, he was shot by his captors to hush up further revelations. Anyhow, when Stavisky's dossier was sought for in the Ministry of Justice it was missing, and various officials in and out of the Cabinet were accused of having been too friendly with the swindler. Excitement rose in Paris and riots took place on the boulevards reminiscent of those twenty years ago when, on the eve of the World War, the wife of Joseph Caillaux shot the editor of *Le Figaro* to suppress impending personal and political disclosures. Premier Chautemps was not involved personally but had to resign in view of the prevailing lack of confidence in the political regime. Fascism has made little apparent headway in France to date, but in moments of public excitement there is always a chance of a sudden shift in opinion or of a coup d'etat.

THAT LAWLESSNESS in high places breeds it in low is evident in California, which is now paying dearly for its long-continued imprisonment of Mooney and Billings on fabricated testimony and the recent declaration of its Governor in support of lynching. In the past year California has been quite as ruthless and brutal in denying elementary legal rights to striking workers as Alabama has been in refusing justice to Negroes. Employers and local-government officials have conspired to intimidate, attack, and throw into jail the leaders of various strikes among agricultural laborers, and the fact that the latter have been largely Mexicans, Japanese, and Filipinos has made it easy to practice such violence without serious rebuke from the majority of the citizens of the State. Perhaps the most flagrant instance has been the complete suppression of civil rights in the strike lately called by the Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union among the lettuce pickers in the Imperial Valley. Not only has picketing been forcibly prevented but strikers have been clubbed, their property destroyed, their leaders jailed, and even their lawyers kidnapped. A. L. Wirin, attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, was taken lately from a hotel in Brawley and beaten by a gang of vigilantes and county officials. Mr. Wirin had gone to Brawley to speak at a meeting planned to test the ban against such gatherings. The chief of police had prohibited the meeting but an injunction had been obtained from a federal court forbidding interference with it. Attorney-General Cummings has been asked to direct the federal District Attorney at Los Angeles to investigate the episode, and he cannot be too insistent in pursuing the leaders of this rebellion against national authority among the planters of the Imperial Valley and their sycophants in public office.

WHILE 30,000 STRIKING WORKERS picketed collieries in the hard-coal fields of Pennsylvania, seeking recognition of their independent United Anthracite Miners, the powerful organization which the insurgents have been fighting, the United Mine Workers of America, held its annual meeting at Indianapolis and studiously avoided any mention of the Scranton and Wilkes-Barre difficulties. Several delegates, it is true, went so far as to charge feebly that the rebel union had joined the coal operators in a plot to split the U. M. W., but discussion of the question was indefinitely postponed, and it was indicated that it would be zealously ignored. Meanwhile the strikers proposed an end to their walk-out, on one condition—that their union be granted the same modest rights as the old-line union. Officers of the U. M. W. refused to consider such a proposal and continued their policy of silence. The same attitude has been taken by the operators and the National Labor Board. The members of the independent union, finding their conciliatory efforts ignored, are daily growing more impatient, and violence is increasing. Recently there have been shootings and bombings and widespread disorder. The situation is rapidly approaching a crisis, and the continued non-recognition of from 30,000 to 50,000 miners is certainly not calculated to help.

IT IS NO NEW OBSERVATION that howls against interference in business go up only in those instances in which the government might conceivably make money for the public. A government-owned utility, shout the holding companies, kills private initiative and undermines investments. But we have never heard a business man criticize the Bureau of Standards for its interference in furnishing him with valuable and expert information; we have never heard a newspaper publisher criticize the Post Office for carrying his product at a loss; the Forest Service is practically never criticized for trying to repair some of the devastations of private business; and the Bureau of Mines, since 1910, has been quietly making mines safer for the workers without, so far as we know, a peep out of the mine owners. It is the admirable record of the Bureau of Mines, in fact, which inspires these remarks. The bureau was organized to discover and correct causes of explosions and other accidents in the country's mines. In the four years from 1907 through 1910, in which latter year the bureau was established, 2,123 persons were killed in explosions. From 1929 through 1932 only 714 persons were killed in such accidents, although the tonnage for the second four-year period was almost a million tons higher. Mining accidents in general have decreased from 2,788 per year in the first period to 1,720 in the second. Scott Turner, director, modestly feels that the bureau, through its experiments and its educational work, has had much to do with bringing about this great reduction in mine fatalities. For instance, many explosions are known to have been prevented in mines by the spreading through them of rock-dust, a device tested and recommended by the bureau. In the mining industry, as in many others, private initiative and intense competition have forced low production costs with resulting devastation of human resources. When will the public learn that economically and socially it would be more profitable for the government to *prevent* the destruction of resources than merely to act as Red Cross nurse in the cruel war for private profits?

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# The NRA's Fever Chart

FACTS are now sufficiently in hand for the closing weeks of last year so that a measurably accurate chart can be made of the NRA and the allied recovery program for 1933, or for the first seven months of its existence. It is a fever chart with many ups and downs and some not easily explainable developments, but a few prognostications seem already to be possible. First, it may be well to present the record in various respects:

*Employment.* Estimates of the number of unemployed when Mr. Roosevelt took office on March 4, last, vary from 13,000,000 on the part of the American Federation of Labor to 17,000,000 by the Alexander Hamilton Institute. There was some reduction in unemployment until the last part of 1933, when the tide turned back again slightly. In a summary early this year the A. F. of L. estimated that 1,800,000 persons who were out of work at the beginning of 1933 were reabsorbed in industry during the year. In addition, 4,600,000 found temporary jobs through the Public Works Administration, the Civil Works Administration, or the Civilian Conservation Corps. It is doubtful, though, if any persons in this second category should be regarded as legitimately reemployed. Certainly the expenditures for the CWA and the CCC are outright doles, and at least half the persons cared for were formerly on private or public relief rolls. In any event the A. F. of L. estimates that in November 10,702,000 workers still had no industrial employment. This represents a fifth of the country's normal wage-earning population, and it is evident that nothing satisfactory has been done yet in lessening unemployment, although much has been accomplished toward better relief of the unemployed.

*Cost of Living.* A great many mistaken ideas about changes in the cost of living have been circulated during the past year owing to confusing it with variations in prices of different sorts. Wholesale prices are not a direct indication of the cost of living, and retail prices are misleading when based on a limited group of the items that comprise the necessities of living for the average person. Probably the best figures on the cost of living are those issued for June and December of each year by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. They are based on average budgets for food, clothing, rent, household articles, fuel and light, and other items in thirty-two widely separated cities. Every item except rent increased in 1933, although not as much as many persons suppose. Taking the year 1913 as 100, the cost of living was 132.1 in December, 1932; 128.3 in June, 1933; 135 in December, 1933. This indicates that the cost of living was less last June than in December, 1932, but increased by 5.2 per cent between June and December of 1933. These figures correspond fairly closely with those of the National Industrial Conference Board, which estimates that the cost of living was 2.9 per cent higher in December, 1933, than in the same month of 1932, although it was 22.8 per cent less last December than in December, 1929. After rising steadily for some months, the cost of living declined 0.3 per cent last November and 0.6 per cent in December, indicating a temporary check to increasing prices.

*Wages and Hours.* The American Federation of Labor estimates that the average working week was shorter by four and a half hours at the end of 1933 than a year before. In regard to wages it says:

> In wages there have been definite gains under codes for the lowest-wage groups; but workers of average or higher wages have been forced to a lower living standard. Hourly wage rates average higher by 5½ cents per hour, but in many cases this is not enough to compensate for shorter hours; and in no case is it enough to compensate for higher prices.
>
> Workers' income in our sixteen chief producing and distributing industries averaged $20.53 a week in November, 1932, and $20.56 in November, 1933. Meanwhile, food prices are up 7 per cent and prices of clothing and furnishings are higher by 21 per cent, so that workers' real buying power is considerably lower. Millions who got jobs during the year are better off, but those who had jobs at more than a minimum wage have lost ground.
>
> Mass buying power has gained during the year, partly from reemployment in industry and partly from jobs created by the government through PWA and CWA. Income of all workers in industry is 11.7 per cent higher at this year-end than last, a gain of about $243,000,000 monthly.
>
> PWA pay roll has added $60,000,000 and CWA about $240,000,000, so that workers' total buying power per month is above last year by $543,000,000, or 26.4 per cent.

*Farmers' Income.* According to the *Consumers' Guide* of January 12, last, published by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the position of farmers improved appreciably in 1933, although not as much as had been hoped. Taking the average between 1910 and 1914 as 100, the prices which farmers paid for what they bought amounted to 101 on February 15, 1933, 117 on November 15, and 118 on December 15. The prices which they received for what they sold came to 49 on February 15, 1933, 71 on November 15, and 68 on December 15. The buying power of farm products was 49 on February 15, 1933, 61 on November 15, and 58 on December 15. This shows some net gain, although with an unfortunate decline toward the end of 1933.

*Business Activity.* The Federal Reserve agent in New York has estimated a gain in production and trade of 10 per cent in 1933, which is close to other computations. The index of business activity of the *Annalist,* based on production in leading industries, ranged from 63 in January, 1933, to a low of 58.5 in March, a high of 89.5 in July, and an estimated 69.2 for December.

*Construction.* During the first four months of 1933 construction declined, falling to the lowest point in twenty-four years in April, when the daily average of contracts was $1,910,000. From then on it rose slowly, and when the Public Works Administration finally began to award contracts it soared so rapidly that it reached a daily average of $10,300,000 in December, a gain of 440 per cent in eight months. Building seems destined to continue, as there is a large amount to be spent between now and next June and a big sum in the 1934-35 federal budget.

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As one studies the chart as set forth above, certain hopeful developments toward recovery stand out, while grim resistances are equally plain. Not only has unemployment not been eliminated, but it does not promise to become substantially less and it may grow considerably more. The effort of the NRA to reduce hours while preserving weekly wages puts a premium on more mechanization of industry, as John Strachey pointed out recently in *The Nation,* and it appears that a large percentage of the country's population will have to be supported indefinitely by means of a federal dole.

President Roosevelt took office not only with the plausible idea that it was desirable to raise the prices of farm products and so help the farmers out of a hole even at the expense of the rest of the community, but he held to the odd belief that it was well to raise all prices and thus, as he imagined, stimulate industry in general. As *The Nation* has already pointed out, Mr. Roosevelt was extraordinarily fortunate in that in 1933, at least, his hope of a general price rise largely miscarried. The danger remains for the future, though, and is the most obvious rock on which the Roosevelt program may come to grief. So far, the farmer seems to have gained something from higher prices, but the wage and salary worker has lost, except that a larger total of persons has been employed and wages of the lowest-paid workers have to some extent been protected. That is, certain minority groups have been assisted at the expense of the community as a whole.

Probably this is desirable, but in plain language it means that the Roosevelt recovery program is succeeding, and can succeed, only through a reduced standard of living for the country as a whole. The NRA so far is only a modified spread-the-work movement. It is better than the latter in that it has preserved or increased the total earnings of various low-paid workers. It is not so good in that this very effort has made it impossible to spread available work enough to absorb more than a fraction of the unemployed. The fine phrases of six months ago about "increasing the purchasing power of farmers and wage-earners" have been forgotten in a national readjustment in which the workers in general are living in a reduced way in order that the less fortunate among them may be able to live at all. The only considerable redistribution of income that has occurred has been among those who have only a small income to distribute. Nor does any other solution seem likely so long as our recovery program is designed, as now, to save capitalism rather than to eliminate the profit system as a method of conducting industry.

During the first few months of its existence the Roosevelt Administration tried to revive industry by helping it to help itself. This effort virtually collapsed when last autumn it was realized that production was outrunning consumption and prices began to totter through the failure of the public to buy. The Administration has more recently resorted to the pulmotor. It is supporting the unemployed and bolstering up business by direct expenditures from the public funds. So long as this can go on, disaster may be averted, and it is possible that the extra purchasing power distributed may stimulate independent industrial activity. The danger is that vast bond issues, by expanding credit and undermining confidence in repayment, will wreck the currency system and with it the whole recovery program.

# War Words in the East

TEMPERS are rising again in the Far East. Statesmen directly or indirectly involved are resorting to barely diplomatic language, which borders on the indiscreet when it does not actually contain menacing warnings. Undisguised preparations for war go on apace.

Immediately concerned are Japan and the Soviet Union, although the United States, Great Britain, and France are, to say the least, looking on with more than passing interest. A few weeks ago Maxim Litvinov, the Foreign Commissar of the Soviet Union, frankly admitted that Russia was actively preparing for war in Siberia. While denying that the Soviet Union would take the offensive, he declared that its military preparations were absolutely essential as a matter of self-defense because the Japanese imperialists were not to be trusted. His statement was followed by a speech delivered before the Diet by the new Japanese Foreign Minister, Koki Hirota. The Japanese, said Hirota, had long desired and long worked for friendly relations with the Soviet Union. But now the Russians had taken a strange new attitude toward Japan. This puzzled the Japanese, who could not understand why the Soviet Union should show such an unfriendly side. Hirota's speech was obviously meant not only to convey a warning to Russia that Japan was prepared to meet any challenge, but also to put the blame on the Russians in the event that fighting broke out on the Manchurian border.

Two leaders of the Russian Communist Party have replied by openly accusing Japan of planning to invade Siberia. Lazarus Kaganovich, second in command, declared that "every imperialist is hypocritical and cunning, and this applies especially to the Japanese imperialists. They are taking advantage of the international situation. They have seized Manchuria, are attempting to take full possession of China, and are dreaming of conquering the Soviet Far East, Siberia, and the world in general." Joseph Stalin entered the fray a few days later with the sweeping declaration that the "imperialist Powers," especially Japan and Germany, would literally take their lives in their hands if they were to start another war. Russia's relations with Japan, he said, "need serious improvement." But, he added with considerable feeling, "we have taken necessary measures to defend ourselves against an attack."

Through all these statements and counter-statements runs another note. The fear of an outbreak in the Far East has now apparently become so real that Japan and Russia are casting about for allies. Both Stalin and Kaganovich stressed the fact that the United States had recognized the Soviet Union, and both spoke warmly of the improvement in Soviet relations with America, France, and the countries of Eastern Europe. Nor did Stalin neglect to mention, as though their aid could be counted on in case of trouble, "the solid friendships with Turkey and Persia and the good relations with Italy." For his part, Hirota made a frank bid for American friendship and declared that Japan was sure it could continue to depend upon the traditional good-will of the great British Empire. Hirota's overture to the United States suggests that the Japanese believe there is more to American recognition of Russia than appears to the naked

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eye and that they have at last been thoroughly frightened by our gigantic naval-building program.

That this program has been laid down as an answer to Japan's military preparations and with an eye directly on the menacing situation in the Far East can no longer be denied. Even the Administration's supporters in Congress are scarcely at pains to conceal the fact that the naval program is aimed at Japan. But whether the ships are really to be built, or are merely being put on paper with a view to using them as a "big stick" against the Japanese and British at the coming naval conference, is not so clear. In either case the adoption of this program can only add to the suspicion and tension now abroad in the world. With Japan and Russia threatening each other, with British admirals secretly meeting in Singapore "to consider the ominous situation developing in the Pacific area," with the Italian Foreign Office frankly stating that Japan means to go to war, and with a French publicist like Edouard Herriot warning his countrymen of the approaching conflict, it would seem the better part of wisdom for us to proceed as discreetly and cautiously as humanly possible. By planning to build more and ever more warships we are simply causing Far Eastern tempers and suspicions to rise still higher.

# LaGuardia to Date

FIORELLO H. LaGUARDIA has been Mayor of New York City for a month. Since he has nearly all of a four-year term of office yet to serve, it is perhaps unfair to begin at this early date to evaluate his administration. Yet in his first month the reform Mayor of New York has accomplished enough to make his election memorable. In the first place he has surrounded himself with appointees of the first order, intelligent, informed, capable. Robert Moses as Park Commissioner, A. A. Berle as City Chamberlain, Paul Blanshard as Commissioner of Accounts, Paul Windels as Corporation Counsel, Austin H. MacCormick as Commissioner of Correction, among many others, are sufficient proof that Mr. LaGuardia looked only for fitness for a given job and paid no attention to former political affiliations or loyalties.

Before Commissioner Blanshard was a fortnight in office he had obtained the resignation of one city official on charges of corruption and had preferred charges against another. Fred C. Lemmerer, one of the three commissioners of the Triborough Bridge Authority, resigned when Mr. Blanshard accused him of having accepted a $930 brokerage commission after renting space for the authority's offices. John Stratton O'Leary, another of the commissioners, against whom Mr. Blanshard filed charges of inefficiency and neglect, is fighting the complaint. Mr. Blanshard has also charged the architects of the Rikers Island prison buildings with irregularities and abuses in connection with the construction of these buildings, and has recommended that final payments be suspended until a thorough investigation into the building operations has been made. Corporation Counsel Windels, in the first weeks of his term of office, announced that excessive fees had been paid by the city for condemnation of land for public purposes. He cited a tract of land in the Rockaways under condemnation for Marine Park. It was assessed at $75,000 and State Supreme Court Justice Marshall handed to the owners a condemnation award of $434,258. Mr. Windels mentioned also the case of one "expert" who had received fees of $273,000 in four years from the city for services in the condemnation of land. The shocking disclosures at Welfare Island, which show the prison to have been completely under the domination of a gang of thugs who lived like princes at the expense of the great majority of the prisoners and with the connivance of the prison officials, provided the next scandal. The market racket, which revealed that tribute was automatically being paid by vendors to racketeers, was another. And every day some new example of curious city financing was discovered to confound the Mayor and his cabinet in their desire to provide a sound and solvent government for the city, as for instance when Controller Cunningham found that some $28,750,000 owed to the city on assessments not only had not been collected but had never even been billed.

Before these disclosures were more than under way, however, the Mayor commenced work on his plans to balance the city budget. His proposal for a bill which would grant him what Governor Lehman, in great alarm, described as "dictatorial powers" is already municipal history, as is his compromise which gave the same powers to himself and the Board of Estimate. Opposition to the second bill came largely from groups representing 140,000 city employees who would be affected by the Mayor's proposals to effect economy in part by a mandatory furlough of from two to four weeks without pay to all city employees receiving salaries of more than $2,000. School teachers, firemen, policemen, and others hurried to Albany to protest that they wanted to see the city's budget balanced—but not at their expense. The Mayor's reply to their complaint that he had promised not to cut city salaries was sharp and to the point. "I found a shipwreck and I am trying to get the city employees into a lifeboat until I can put them on a sound ship." He further prophesied that unless the city employees were willing to take the moderate cut he proposed for them, in the shape of a furlough without pay, they might face payless pay days next fall and might find that $80,000,000 or $100,000,000 of city bonds in their retirement funds would be in danger of default. In short, the Mayor proposed to cut city expenses by eliminating unnecessary jobs and by a temporary and moderate salary reduction. And in spite of campaign promises, which Mr. LaGuardia may have been rash to make, that is evidently what will have to be done in the immediate situation.

As far as New York City is an entity it is easy-going, cynical, hard to arouse to indignation, and harder still to keep aroused. In a wave of disgust it threw out Tammany Hall last November and put into office a Mayor who was pledged to the reform of the city government. Yet now that the reforms have started, Mayor LaGuardia finds that his worst enemy is at least a part of that New York which elected him to save it from the predatory tiger. The frightened city employees, led by Frank J. Prial, defeated for Controller in the last election, are by no means unlikely to find Mr. LaGuardia their best friend when reorganization of city finances takes place. At least, having elected a reform mayor the electorate as a whole would put itself in a ridiculous position if it refused to support him in the reforms which he proposes to make.

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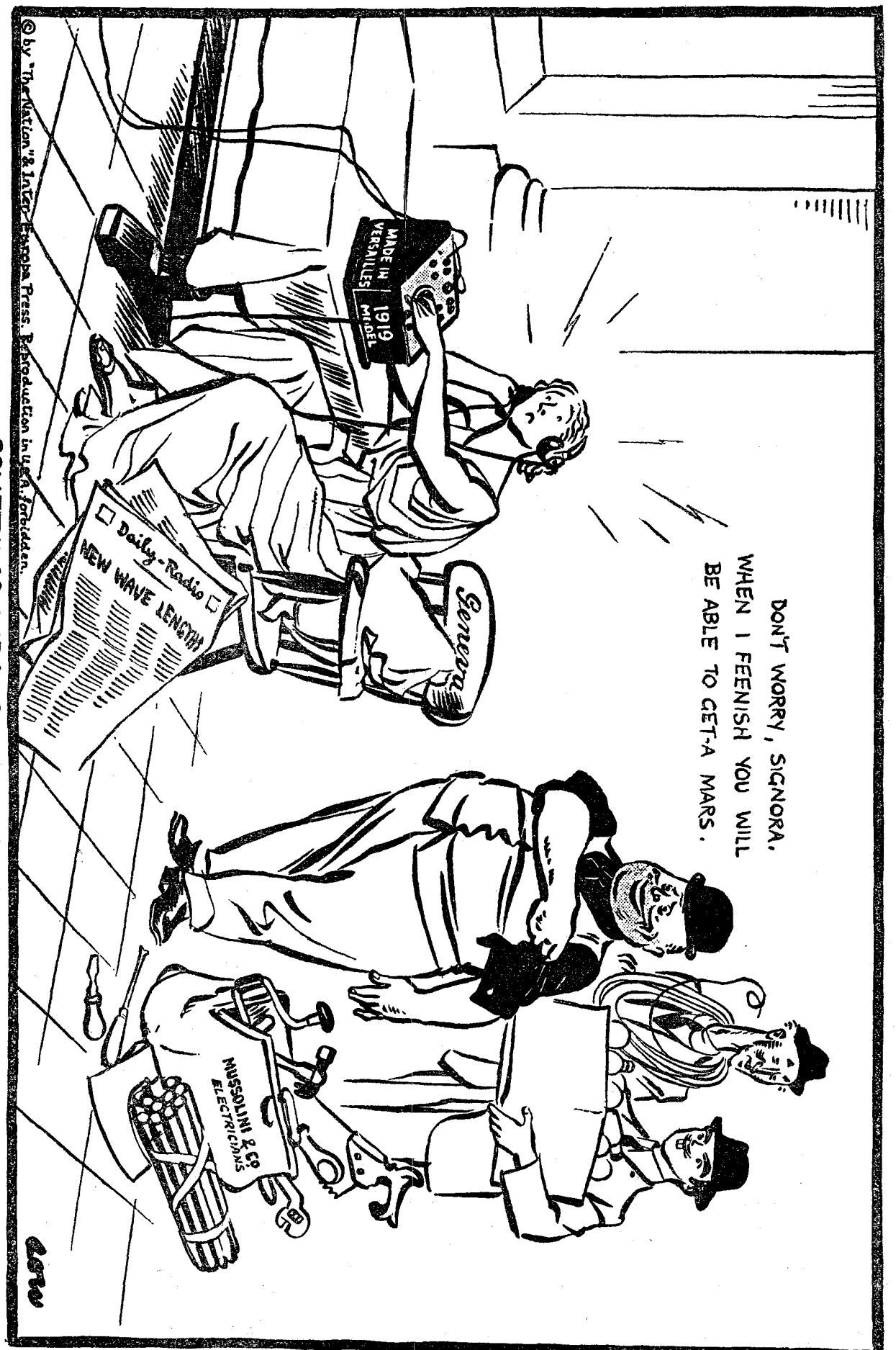
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# Issues and Men

## Joseph B. Eastman, Coordinator

WHO is the Coordinator of the railroads who has just come out with a report to the President declaring that government ownership alone is the ultimate solution of the railroad problem in the United States? Well, for one thing, he is an extremely modest man. Here, for example, is his sketch of himself as contributed to "Who's Who in America":

> EASTMAN, Joseph Bartlett, interstate commerce commr.; b. Katonah N. Y., June 26, 1882; s. Rev. John Huse and Lucy (King) E.; B.A. Amherst, 1904, LL.D., 1926. Holder of Amherst fellowship at South End House (social settlement), Boston, 1905; sec. Public Franchise League, Boston, 1906-13; counsel for employees of various street railway companies in wage arbitration cases, 1913-14; member Mass. Public Service Commn., by appmt. of Govs. Walsh and McCall, 1915-19; mem. Interstate Commerce Commn. since Feb. 17, 1919. Mem. Psi Upsilon, Phi Beta Kappa. Clubs: Boston City; Cosmos, Racquet (Washington, D.C.). *Home:* 2266 Cathedral Av. N.W., Washington, D.C.

That is certainly not blowing his own trumpet when one considers that Mr. Eastman has been for years past the outstanding member of the Interstate Commerce Commission, outstanding in his ability, in the courage of his convictions, in the wide range of his views. I was interested to read the other day an article by the financial editor of one of our New York dailies, who is of the opinion that when the New Deal and Joseph B. Eastman get through with the railroads no one will be able to recognize them. That, he said, was the opinion of the leading railroad men themselves. He then quoted them as saying that the trouble with this Mr. Eastman was that he knew more about the railroads of the United States than any other living man!

No one must think from this that Mr. Eastman is a mere fanatic driving away at a certain program in season and out of season, long-haired, visionary, dominating, and ruthless. Far from it. His manner is unassuming, his appearance without those qualities which we usually associate with a domineering personality. As a matter of fact, he is extremely reasonable, and his report to the President that he did not think that this was the time for the government to take over the railroads was characteristic of his reasonableness. For years he has seen no other way out than government ownership. Yet he has never been dogmatic, nor has anyone been able to say definitely just whether he has in mind the appointment of a Secretary of Railroads to run the whole show from Washington, as the army and the navy and the post offices are run, or whether he prefers the plan which he submitted with his report to the President—without, however, claiming authorship of it—which calls for the creation of a corporation managed by five or seven trustees all the stock of which shall be owned by the government.

I have not been moved to call attention to Mr. Eastman because he is exceptional; there are many other public officers who are serving the government with great ability and devotion. He himself answers the question whether it is possible for a government to enlist men of first-class competence and shining integrity without paying them the high salaries offered by private corporations to the men they select for president or vice-president. When I contrast the character and talents of Mr. Eastman with those of some of the men who have been paid a million dollars a year by banks and steel companies, it is to laugh. He is the complete answer to those who have been defending the great annual payments to Wiggin and Mitchell, or to Grace of the Bethlehem Steel Company, on the ground that they were worth it because of their business-getting ability. Mr. Eastman has had the respect and admiration of everyone who has come in contact with him, Democrat or Republican, capitalist, official, or politician. I have no doubt that he could have wangled a fat job for himself from some of the large corporations years ago, and feathered his own nest most richly. He has preferred his small government salary and the privilege of serving his fellow-countrymen, which is delightful proof that the private-profit motive is not essential to the carrying on of a civilized government. And there are many like Mr. Eastman, as I have said. Recently *The Nation* placed on its Honor Roll for 1933 Consul-General George S. Messersmith and five other public servants of distinction: Frances Perkins, Jerome N. Frank, John Collier, William E. Borah, and William C. Bullitt, all for distinguished service.

When I have traveled abroad lately I have been struck with the enormous improvement in the quality of the men in our diplomatic service as contrasted with those politicians whom I found all over Europe, in northern Africa, and in Turkey in the course of a six months' journey undertaken just after I was graduated from Harvard University. Repeatedly then I felt disgraced by the gauche, ill-mannered, ill-bred, and incompetent men representing our country. In 1931 I covered very much the same ground (without going into Africa), and the change was simply astounding; particularly was this true of the young career men who have entered the diplomatic service during the last ten years prepared to make it a life work. Washington is full of fine men of scientific and intellectual distinction who would honor any government. They bring out clearly how vast are our resources in rich human material, and make it all the more regrettable that cheap politicians who strut their little day and pass from the scene overnight are allowed to manhandle the government services, to starve departments and bureaus that ought never to be pinched, to limit the activities of vitally necessary governmental undertakings while they spend untold millions upon the inefficient and wasteful army and navy—I mean inefficient in organization and expenditure, without reference to their fighting qualities.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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# Spain: Viva la Republica!

By ANITA BRENNER

I

SEPTEMBER, in Algeciras. A sharp wind blows across the Mediterranean between the Spanish coast and the dark zigzag of Morocco, but it is hot and quiet in Algeciras. Some railroad and dock workers are waiting on the waterfront to load the fast Madrid express. They are wisecracking and eating pears bought at forced bargain with a deaf and mutilated man. Most of the wisecracking is aimed at a spry, leathery little man who it seems nearly killed his woman a couple of days ago. They kid him about it, saying he is so big and brave he will end up in jail yet. A gaunt, angry-looking man with a black silk scarf tied high around his neck says yes, brave men go to jail. The small man jumps after one of the worst jokers; the rest kid them both. A knife flashes in the small one's hand, the other one hops, rubs his leg, the rest interfere, and they all sit down laughing again.

A street piano pulled by a mule drives up, playing the "Marseillaise." The mule is led by a boy about eighteen years old. His hair is all mixed up over his head and he grins as if he had something to celebrate. He passes a small plate around, jingles it, jingles the mule, points to the piano playing the "Marseillaise," grins, and says, "La república, la república," with each jingle. The dock workers all start jingling and laughing and saying, "La república, la república," and the small man points to the grinning boy and laughs. I ask them what is the joke and they say, "Look, he's celebrating the republic!" The boy says he has been doing it since the republic began, he has been all over Spain with his mule playing the "Marseillaise." The workers say: "Take his picture; he's the last man in Spain celebrating the republic. Put his picture in the paper. It's a good joke."

It is nearly three years since they were all singing the "Marseillaise" and shooting off firecrackers and yelling, "Viva la república!" Now the constitutional Cortes has just been dissolved and they have to vote again. Last time they voted they got a republic. Now they'd like to vote to get something else. The gaunt man says: "What did we get out of it anyhow? Maybe wages are higher but there aren't any jobs, so what good does that do? They passed a lot of laws and changed the names of the streets. It was a picnic for the lawyers and the writers. When you vote you just exercise the unworthy privilege of choosing your masters. The only thing is direct action."

A middle-aged man says: "Yes, but the Catholics and the Monarchists have lined up to get the Socialists, and if you don't vote you give the Cavern [the right] a vote. The Cavern is against the workers, and if the workers don't get together we'll have fascism." Another one says: "How can we have fascism? The fascists are everybody who has money. You take, for example, in my town, there are forty people with money and four hundred without. You put forty against four hundred and who wins? We win, of course. We're not little wooden soldiers like the Germans. They can't put that over on us." The gaunt man says: "We can't win by voting. Voting just gives the Socialists jobs. That's all they want, jobs. And look what they did in Casas Viejas! The only thing is direct action and Libertarian Communism."

II

Casas Viejas is not very far away from Algeciras. On the way you pass bleak yellow fields, and olive groves, and cork groves, and some vineyards. Now and then you see a patch of green like an apron in front of a white house, and you see quite a lot of fat cattle. The few big houses seem to be empty and closed up. In places you also see charred trees and burned fields. Some of them have been burned over to prepare them for plowing and others have been burned by people who set fire to them to destroy the crops. Most of the land around here, as throughout Andalusia, Castile, and Estremadura, is owned in big parcels by people who live in Madrid, Seville, and Paris. They have not occupied the big houses for many years. It was too dangerous. The land is subdivided and rented at prices high enough to cover mortgages and taxes and leave a nice profit. Often the value on which the rent is based is twice as high as the value on which taxes are paid. Rent values became very high during the war, but even so renters were able to subdivide and subrent, pay interest and some cultivation costs, and still make a good profit. Some lands are subrented three and four times over, down the line.

The man who actually cultivates the land has to do it on a pretty narrow margin. He has to be backed by a bank loan, and if he wants a profit he can pay his workers very little. They used to get about two pesetas a day, about twenty-five cents, and some soup made of oil, water, garlic, and tomatoes. They worked only part of the year, altogether not more than two-thirds of it; the rest of the time they got charity or did odd jobs, and their wives worked. They tried to save to cover the off time, so that even when they were working they didn't have enough to eat. Many of them—perhaps all of them—don't know what it is like to eat as much as they want. They could see that the land was rich, and the people who owned it were rich, and the monasteries and convents on it were rich, but they had to measure their rations to live, and sometimes they had to steal a little. The only chance was to leave, go to America, and if they couldn't manage that they listened to speeches and read books and papers about how to get the rich off their backs. It was pretty easy: just kick them out and take the land. Without wealth everybody would be good and love his neighbor. The state was plainly something that supported wealth, so the best thing was to do away with the state.

During the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera the Socialists pushed wage-increase laws, and when the republic was proclaimed, these laws were among the first to be voted. They provided a minimum wage of eight pesetas a day. The farmers weren't getting as much as formerly for their crops, they had loans to cope with, and they got around the law by hiring workers from other regions and from Portugal who would take anything. The Socialists then passed a law

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called the Ley de Términos Municipales, which provided that no one could employ labor from the "outside" if there were any local unemployed. Since these laws presaged the ruin of many small farmers, the banks withdrew credit.

The farmers and landowners, settling on a policy of sabotage, organized into a league called the Confederación Española de Derechas Agrarias (C. E. D. A.). They turned much of the arable land into pasture, which takes very little labor, and wherever they could they cut down on production, made no repairs, and opposed all the government was doing to advance irrigation, introduce new crops, and intensify agriculture to make up for the larger and larger wastelands. This made a kind of iron ring around most villages and towns, for though they all had formerly owned a certain amount of communal land, it had been stolen during the last twenty years or so. (The procedure was simple: the mayor and his relatives and friends just took pieces. Who knew the records, who would protest, and to whom?)

Casas Viejas was one of the villages besieged by wastelands. The people in this village were all out of work. None of them had any savings and no one offered them any relief. Postal money orders that used to come from relatives in America stopped. They could force the farmers to give them food or work, as some peasants did, or they could steal olives and acorns. People were always being caught—and shot—by the Civil Guard in the dead of night with a basket of acorns. The government said agrarian reform was on the way, on the way, and some lands that had belonged to grandees now belonged to the government; but there was no money to finance collectives or private patches, and nothing happened. In some villages with Communist or Socialist mayors municipal funds were used for small agrarian projects, but as most public funds were saddled with big debts from the Primo de Rivera days, nothing much could be done that way. Besides, the courts checked almost every move.

In Casas Viejas the people were starving a year after they voted for the republic. Men were watching their children die of pneumonia, dysentery, tuberculosis, cramps. The village grocer and the village baker tried to help a little but they were going bankrupt. Casas Viejas had nothing to lose any more; the only way out—since nothing came of the republic—was Libertarian Communism. They waited for the word, and made their plans. One family, known as the Six Fingers family because the head of it was called Six Fingers, led the revolt. They put a red-and-black flag over the courthouse, told the Civil Guard to go away or come and work, and waited to hear from a red-and-black Madrid.

Madrid, the Socialist-Republican government headed by Manuel Azaña, sent a detachment of Assault Guards with machine-guns. The Assault Guard is a kind of national police corps created by the republic. Members are recruited chiefly among veterans of Moroccan campaigns, and Spaniards know what that means. The detachment that went to Casas Viejas thought it was going to fight savages, and somewhere or other it had got the notion that it must "take no prisoners." The Civil Guard in Casas Viejas showed them the Six Fingers house, a straw-thatched hut in a hollow on top of a hill. Six Fingers was barricaded inside with his family. The guardsmen trained a machine-gun on the house and tried to make a sieve of it, but it was too low and the bullets lodged in the thatch. In a house nearby they could feel the thump, sputter, and whine, but they didn't dare look out to see what was happening. The Assault Guards surrounded the Six Fingers house and set fire to it. Only one person, a small girl, escaped. She ran out shrieking, her clothes afire. One man of the Assault Guard who had been dragged inside by the Six Fingers family when he fell wounded or dead near the door was burned up, too. Guardsmen then went through the town, picked out some of the people the Civil Guard led them to, got others who were looking out of their doors, and shot them all. They threw them on the burning house so it would look as if a fighting force, barricaded inside, had perished in battle.

The episode at Casas Viejas created a fine justification for an attack by conservatives on the Republicans and Socialists. The Catholics and Monarchists sent people to the village to get details and pictures; they rewrote and indorsed what the Anarcho-Syndicalists said; they called Azaña and his Cabinet scoundrels, brutes, grafters, fiends. (The great slaughters of the monarchy—Annual, Montjuich, the Socialists mowed down in jail yards in 1917, the reign of terror in Barcelona in 1921, the execution of republicans just before the fall of the monarchy—had not impressed them much. That was Law and Order.) In addition they said the Socialists were all getting rich in office, that Azaña was a loose and malevolent man, and that together they were ruining the national economy. Wasn't there a crisis? Who was to blame but the government, passing disastrous laws? Wasn't there plenty of work under Primo de Rivera, up to 1929?

All this didn't do anything for Casas Viejas except make it famous. The people of the village acquired a dramatic technique. They show you the Six Fingers house, where the machine-guns were placed, the houses of the other victims, and they tell you how Mariquita escaped from the blaze. The Civil Guard watches you closely and keeps tab on whose house you visit and who talks to you. A stool—they whisper it to you—has attached himself to you. You pry yourself loose and in a crowded hut you try to find out how the people of Casas Viejas are living. "Living? We're eating each other," they tell you. One of them shoulders his way into the hut laughing. The joke is that the priest is giving away loaves of bread. And they explain: "See? It's elections. He never did that before." Another says he hears the Cavern is going to pay five pesetas a vote; God knows he needs it, and what difference will it make anyhow, the joke will be on them. Another says: "They're offering jobs. I've never voted but once in my life, that was to bring the republic, and I guess I won't vote again. They used to offer you heaven and now they offer you jobs, but it's the same people and you'll get the job about as you get heaven, when you're dead." This is a joke, everybody laughs. The landlords have their jokes, too. They say: "You wanted a republic? Well, now eat republic. Viva!"

## III

In Madrid the political armies are mobilizing. There are posters that show, in graphs, how unemployment has gone up and production down, how the budget has gone up and business down. The posters are labeled "Anti-Marxist Front." The walls are scrawled with swastikas, sickles and scythes, *vivas and mueras*. Students and workers tear down the anti-Marxist posters and policemen chase them. The Radical Party is in power. It is headed by Alejandro Lerroux, who made himself famous when he was young as an

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Anarchist orators. He said, "Let us lift the veils of the nuns and make them holy mothers." Alejandro Lerroux is a friend of Juan March, the richest man in Spain. His party has a nucleus of old republicans surrounded by a mass of new ones. In it are all the old politicos who had to stay in the game for a living. Together with the C. E. D. A., they are setting up the old election machinery which was half dismantled by the republic, and meanwhile they have practically suspended the agrarian reform, the lay laws, and some of the labor laws. Under their leadership the government extends to the priesthood its subsidy, which was to have expired, and the transfer of the schools into government hands has been postponed. Cardinal Vidal y Barraquer, who has been quietly keeping in touch with President Alcalá Zamora, has slipped away to Rome on a special passport to negotiate the first steps of a Concordat. And Juan March has walked out of jail.

The Radical Party wants about what the Republican Party in the United States has stood for. Juan March is a combination of Al Capone and Andrew Mellon, and his quarrel with the republic is like their quarrels—over taxes. March was accustomed to having the government do what he wanted, which was to give him the right of way no matter how shady his undertakings. He owns most of the Spanish press. He was in jail charged with smuggling and graft, and while he was there his papers carried on an anti-Azaña, anti-Socialist campaign, making much of Casas Viejas. His business was seriously interfered with, for, after all, the Republican-Socialist bloc was honest.

Throwing out the Republican-Socialists solved a lot of problems: Juan March, the agrarian question, the labor question, the lay laws. So far as March and the C. E. D. A. could see, the constitutional Cortes could be credited with only two good laws: the Ley de Orden Público, which provides for three stages of martial law at the discretion of the Minister of the Interior, and the Ley de Vagos, which says that anybody who cannot show that he has a legitimate income may be preventively jailed, up to ten years, especially if he has ever been in jail. What republican, Socialist, Anarcho-Syndicalist, Communist, of any consequence hasn't? The Radical Party made a convenient bridge for the C. E. D. A., which wants repeal of all laws affecting the church and repeal of the agrarian laws. The C. E. D. A.-Radical alliance had a powerful ally—the President. To save his soul he dissolved the constitutional Cortes just before the lay laws were to have been enforced. Let elections take care of the rest.

The C. E. D. A. sent out a cautious feeler through its political arm, Acción Popular. This is a heterogeneous organization composed largely of farmers squeezed between the banks and the labor laws; it is backed by the landowners and the church, and contains many devout students and a host of upper-class women. Its leader, Gil Robles, used to be president of the Jesuit youth organization, Los Hijos de San Luis. He is a plump, sallow, smiling man with button eyes, a short nose, fleshy lips, and a dimple in his chin. He attended the Nazi Nürnberg Congress and came back with many ideas, but when he tries the fascist salute it turns into a priestly gesture of invocation. Workers call him "El Sacristán."

Gil Robles announced a preelection concentration in Madrid. Denouncing this as a fascist march on Madrid, the Socialists said they would call a general strike. The Anarcho-Syndicalists and the Communists joined, with the slogan "No Bread and No Trains for the Fascists." Since the strike would have stopped everything in Madrid and started a battle, the concentration was called off. Acción Popular organized its campaign on a house-to-house basis. It had at its disposal fleets of cars in which the halt, the lame, and the blind were tenderly taken to vote by young and devout stalwarts under police protection. The cloisters and the monasteries opened, lifelong vows were suspended on election day, and the homes for the aged, the hospitals, asylums, and sanitariums disgorged into the polling booths. In some sections of Madrid crowds picketed the hospitals. They said the dying were being taken to vote, too. All day long mobs chased vote-buyers and beat them up. Acción Popular agents got lists of the dead in each district, and even the dead voted twice, somehow or other getting their ballots into the coffin-like glass caskets presided over by priests. There were polling places in religious schools, Acción Popular propaganda was prominently displayed within, Acción Popular agents were busy without, and the police stood by watchfully.

## IV

The new Cortes opened with the country under martial law, the press censored, the jails bursting with political prisoners, mostly Anarcho-Syndicalists. Three powers won the biggest blocks in the shuffle. The first, the biggest, was obtained by the conservatives (Acción Popular, Monarchists, and other conservatives), the second by the Radicals, the third by the Socialists. Together, Acción Popular and the Radicals can control Parliament, much as the Azaña-Socialist-Republican bloc did before. The C. E. D. A. would rather let the Radical Party have the Cabinet until the people get used to the idea that the C. E. D. A. is republican after all. It announced this after the elections, which split off part of its extreme-right allied wing. Gil Robles cried, "Viva la república!" and said Rome permitted it.

Gil Robles has made two big noisy moves and several quiet ones. The first noisy move was "Viva la república!" The second was a proposal for unemployment relief. His quiet moves, passed by the Cortes, are suspension of the Ley de Términos Municipales, postponement of the lay-law enforcement, and defense of the telephone company's vicious contract. (The I. T. and T. is linked with a national company which dovetails into Jesuit electrical interests.) Robles is busily building up his organization, and the Radical Party, crying "Viva la república," is trying to reorganize the army. His goal, as described to this writer just before the elections, is a "corporative state . . . with centralized executive power and consultative parliamentary powers." He is in favor of labor reform, "without violating the principle of private property." He wants very much to "elevate the culture of the masses," and he thinks it is the duty of the Catholics to persuade the landowners to admit reforms. "We must level things down, though science and culture may suffer for want of protectors."

Whoever stands in the way of this goal, which clearly is fascism pivoting on the church and more specifically on the Jesuit Order, must be destroyed. The first barrier is the Socialist Party. Gil Robles is sure things will work out his way. "My only fear is that things will go too fast. We have to teach the people to look upon Acción Popular as a

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labor party, not as a Catholic party. And we have to teach our own people, too. Their ideals carry them too far. I am a possibilist. As much as is possible, whenever possible, and we'll get to the ideal state. The ideal state? One which respects the rights of the church and the rights of property; that is what a state is for."

Against Gil Robles—what is there? The dismembered republicans such as Azaña's Acción Republicana; Catalonia, violently republican, anti-church, and anti-centralist; the workers. The first two struggle for a leftist, liberal republic such as the Azaña-Socialist bloc tried to shape. They say that a republic with such a Cortes as the present body is not a republic at all. The workers want social revolution. They look at Germany, they look at Spain, and they see enough parallels to rouse them violently. In their own ranks they see disorganization, confusion, fear splitting a mass of at least 4,000,000 men ready to fight. Behind Gil Robles stand the biggest capitalist in Spain and the Jesuit Order; the richest men are his allies. The republic is a kind of dead body being used as a shield.

# Revolution in Colorado

By FRANK CLAY CROSS

*Denver, January 24*

THE belief is apparently pretty widespread that although in general "America is in no danger of revolution," there are real danger spots, in our present hunger crisis, in the great cities—in New York and Chicago and other places heavily populated with people of foreign birth or recent foreign extraction. No one seems to have given serious consideration to the possibility that trouble might first arise in the wide open spaces and pure air of the West. Yet not one of the six States which have been most impotent in combating the specter of starvation is in a great industrial area, and three of them are west of the Mississippi River. Perhaps a glimpse behind the scenes, a brief recital of a few events which took place in Denver between January 4 and January 20—of which not one word appeared in Denver newspapers—may serve to sharpen the senses of citizens in several other States which are also "in no danger of revolution."

To understand the dramatic and ominous events in Colorado, which so strangely escaped the notice of the press, one must know a little of the history of the Twenty-ninth General Assembly of the State, "the Twiddling Twenty-ninth," which met for the first time in January, 1933. That session dragged through 126 long, weary days without taking any action whatever to provide food for thousands of unfortunate victims of the depression, many of whom were literally starving. One after another, bills to raise relief money were introduced only to be challenged and defeated by one of the most vicious and powerful lobbies that ever disgraced an American State. There were, of course, a few worthy members in the legislature, a few fairly upright, brave, and intelligent men; but most of the lot constituted as craven and stupid a group of lawmakers as ever shamed a people. They were completely cowed by the lobbyists—lobbyists against any increase of the income tax, lobbyists against a sales tax, lobbyists against a special gasoline tax and against a division of the highway fund. No proposal was free from attack. Selfish blocs ruled all the voting. Rumors of intimidation and bribery circulated through the Capitol.

At last, on May 13, the farce ended. In Washington Harry L. Hopkins, Federal Relief Administrator, agreed to set aside until July the government's requirement that the burden of caring for the needy should be shared equally by local, State, and federal agencies. In July the government's contribution to Colorado was cut to less than one-third of what it had been in June—from $234,344.61 to $86,314.14. In August it was cut again to $82,889.38, and in September to $57,393.18. The situation became desperate. On August 2, however, "the Twiddling Twenty-ninth" met in special session, at the summons of Governor Johnson, to tackle the problem of relief once more. This time, as a result of the Governor's heroic efforts, a measure calling for a special automobile tax was passed, but almost before the legislators reached home, two suits had been filed to test the constitutionality of the act. On October 18 a reactionary Supreme Court handed down a four-to-three decision against the tax.

Governor Johnson immediately flew to Washington to supplicate Administrator Hopkins for a continuance of federal relief on the promise that he would call another session of the General Assembly in December. The Administrator took compassion and yielded to his entreaty. The legislative session in December, however, was as degenerate as the two which preceded it—perhaps more so. Again the halls of the Capitol were filled with lobbyists. The weaklings of the General Assembly met every plea for action, every shaft of censure from the churches, the relief agencies, and the labor unions, with plaintive protests that they were unable to break the deadlock. "Why don't you go after the lobbyists?" they whimpered. The sordidness of the situation was almost beyond belief.

Another adjournment! People were starving, but the legislators had to go home for Christmas. In Washington the patience of Administrator Hopkins was now exhausted. On January 1, he announced, all further aid for Colorado from the federal government would be discontinued. Soon afterward the newspapers began to be strangely silent about certain very ominous happenings. Two hunger riots at charity stations were entirely ignored. A government agent was almost killed by a mob of desperate men. The incident received hardly a quarter-column of evasive comment. The tide of revolution was rising.

Except for the work of one man the Centennial State would surely have fallen under a reign of terror in the ten days between Christmas and January 3, when the General Assembly reconvened. This man was Edgar M. Wahlberg, chaplain of the House of Representatives and pastor of Grace Community Church in Denver. Edgar Wahlberg is a small man, thirty-four years old. His church is one of

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the most effective and best-run welfare centers to be found anywhere in the West. The poorer classes of the city have absolute confidence in the friendship and judgment of the little preacher, in part, perhaps, because they recognize him as a fellow in poverty. His salary from the church is just $1,200 a year, and he does well to get half of it.

Throughout the shameful sessions of the General Assembly, Mr. Wahlberg had fought valiantly to end the deadlock on relief. He had implored the legislators to face the stark realities. He had even prayed before them for action—any action to alleviate the suffering of destitute men and women and hungry children. "O God," he prayed, "make the more intelligent among us strong to lead. Give those who are afraid, courage. Save us from the temptation and sin of selfishness. Make us see the foolishness of dodging the real issue with petty interests and practices." That prayer didn't sit so well with the legislators. They rather disliked to be so frankly presented in the presence of Almighty God. They accused the chaplain of lobbying, and he was lobbying, lobbying with all his might and main, lobbying for his fellow-men.

When "the Twiddling Twenty-ninth" adjourned for Christmas without any action, ominous rumors began to reach the chaplain. The desperate victims of the lawmakers' grim farce had reached the end of endurance. Tense whispers began to pass from hungry mouths to ready ears—plans for wholesale food thefts, riots, and even bloodshed. Quickly the chaplain summoned his strongest counselors among the sufferers. "Wait! Wait!" he urged. "Don't start trouble yet. If you do you'll only add to your own misery. You'll be clubbed and put in jail. Some of you may be killed. Give me one more chance to get action from the State." He knew, however, that it would be unsafe to ask these men to wait longer without some other definite plan ahead. "When the General Assembly meets again on January 3," he said, "you get every man and woman that you can bring together to come to the State House. Leave the rest to me."

On January 3 the halls of the Capitol were thronged with people, milling, shouting, hurling threats. As Wahlberg went among them he saw that his plan had failed to guard against one danger. Communist leaders had seized control of the mob. The chaplain is not a Communist himself, though some of the legislators had charged him with such connections. "My talk isn't communism," he had retorted. "All hungry people talk the same language."

The rioters stormed into the Senate chamber. The senators, panic-stricken, fled before them. The rioters crowded into the lawmakers' seats while the leaders invaded the rostrum. A genuine Communist meeting followed—the first Communist meeting to be held under the dome of any Capitol in the United States. Over in the House chamber old Speaker Twining kept his wits. He quickly faked a recess and invited the leaders of the mob to come forward. While they harangued, the mob in the galleries showered down catcalls and jeers and threats on the frightened representatives who failed to escape from the room.

Such events would seem important enough for some mention in the press, but the only stories which were carried described the affair as if it had been an orderly and routine protest by the unemployed. The Senate was reported to be not in session but engaged in committee meetings. The Denver *Post,* however, which had previously opposed all bond issues on the part of the city or State, suddenly began to support a million-dollar municipal issue for direct relief in Denver. Yes, in big headlines!

The miscarriage of his first plan did not turn Wahlberg from his determination to forestall further trouble. After the turmoil of January 3, a recurrence of which he managed to prevent the next day, an ominous calm settled down on the Capitol. All the next week, in a tense atmosphere, he worked with the president of the Senate and Speaker Twining on a new scheme to hammer reason into the heads of the stupid legislators. "This situation is dangerous," he warned them. "You've got to get your leaders together to hear about it from people who know the facts." Finally thirteen chosen senators agreed to attend a special meeting on Tuesday morning, January 16, but the House members were too obtuse to listen.

That morning the group of Senate leaders listened aghast to the testimony of men and women whose word they could not doubt. They heard how a crowd of almost 400 desperate men, armed with clubs and other weapons, had met on a vacant lot in the eastern part of the city the previous Sunday at four o'clock in the morning, ready to loot the chain stores for food. Only by a narrow margin had the wiser heads, following the counsel of the chaplain, prevailed upon them to give the lawmakers one more chance. Down on the Platte River bottoms another crowd had been dispersed by similar counsel.

The thirteen senators heard the executive secretary of the Community Chest tell them how his workers were in fear for their lives if some action were not taken at once. Hungry people do not always stop to think who is to blame for their plight. The senators heard stories of almost incredible suffering, of families whose water had been turned off by the city authorities, of mothers who were begging the charities to take their children. Forty thousand people were actually starving to death.

Meanwhile the House members were also beginning to be worried. They came to the conclusion that it might be healthful for them, too, to do a little listening. Consequently they invited the chaplain to bring his witnesses for them to hear the next afternoon. That was Wednesday. On Thursday T. J. Edmunds arrived from Des Moines, Iowa, as an emissary of Administrator Hopkins. On Saturday the General Assembly, now completely cowed, not by the lobbyists but by the hungry mobs, sent a relief bill to Governor Johnson, who signed it at 9:45 Saturday night. It was a compromise bill designed to raise $2,000,000 by adding one cent per gallon to the gasoline tax until August 31, and by taking one-quarter of the highway fund until January 1, 1935. If the Supreme Court lets it stand, perhaps the woes of Colorado are partially solved for a while, but already a suit is threatened by the Rocky Mountain Motorists, Inc.

The next day, Sunday, Mr. Edmunds telephoned Washington. His account of the emergency brought a promise that $500,000 would arrive in Denver Monday morning. Thus may be dispersed for a while the ominous clouds which have hung over Colorado, where, according to the Denver *Post,* "the sun shines 365 days in the year." For a few months more, hungry mouths will be fed; but what will happen then?

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# Chiselers at Work and Play

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

*Washington, January 27*

LIVE and learn. The youthful Senator Nye and the elderly Senator Borah have lived through enough in the last ten days to learn that attacks on the NRA are bad political medicine, especially when they conflict with virtually all the known facts. Nye has admitted his mistake already. Borah never admits anything unless compelled to. (While campaigning for Hoover in 1928 he was compelled to admit that he had stated on the Senate floor eleven years earlier that he would not trust the same Hoover with the expenditure of $100,000,000 of public funds.) To speak harshly of these gentlemen gives me some pain, because my relations with them have been uniformly cordial. At one time, indeed, when there was evidence to support his suspicion that Ruth Hanna McCormick's hired thugs were seeking to plant a blonde chorus girl on him in Chicago, Nye asked me to occupy the same room with him. Heaven only knows how many million cubic yards of breath I have expended in the last ten years defending him against the disparaging appraisals of my colleagues, most of whom consider him a complete nitwit, but I have had cause to wonder lately how much of it was wasted. For Borah I have much personal fondness and a profound respect for his unusual abilities. It is regrettable that he lacks a proportionate integrity of purpose and sense of direction. But no man who plays politics with national recovery is entitled to consideration, and that is what Nye and Borah attempted to do. At the very moment when Hugh Johnson was begging both to become members of a Senate committee with sweeping authority to correct any evils it might find in the administration of the National Recovery Act, and on the very day when Nye was thanking Johnson for his frank and gracious offer and giving every intimation that he would accept, he was going quietly to the Federal Trade Commission to stir up trouble for Johnson. It is not necessary to characterize such conduct, and in view of what the young man heard from his constituents he probably will watch his step hereafter. He had better.

* * * * *

FOR Nye the excuse might be made that he didn't know any better, but no such apology will hold in Borah's case. He is far too sound a lawyer to believe that industry could be kept under codes of competition and still be subject to the full operation of the anti-trust laws. The mere act of meeting to adopt a code and set up a code authority would be a flagrant violation of the law as it stood before the Recovery Act suspended its application. Any argument to the contrary is sheer demagoguery or sheer ignorance, and Borah is far from being an ignoramus. Moreover, for the government to induce industries to place themselves under codes in consideration of certain legal immunities, and then to revoke those immunities, would be a colossal act of dishonor. Nye and Borah bleed for the rights of the "little man," but fail to make clear just whom they mean. It should be made abundantly clear. The "little man" for whom they burn is the fellow who objects to paying his employees a minimum of $12 for a fifty-four-hour week, and the "rights" which they would restore to him are those of working them longer and paying them less! Let these two champions of the common people explain that! The case of Carter Glass is somewhat different. He is a perfectly sincere and irascible old party who spends his days fuming because the economy of the General Grant era perversely refuses to return. His place in history would have been safer if he had entered a monastery the day after he delivered his radio campaign speech. Any talk about the NRA conspiring to foster monopoly is nonsense. I hardly think the readers—or even the editors—of *The Nation* would classify this writer as a friend of monopoly or a tool of Wall Street, but I violate no confidence by saying that Johnson has repeatedly asked me to join his staff and undertake the job of dealing with that very problem. It is a pleasure to report, in passing, that literally thousands of letters are pouring into Washington from persons stating they have canceled their subscriptions to the Chicago *Tribune* because of its scurrilous attacks on the NRA. This was the sheet which introduced the delectable practice of employing known criminals and racketeers. By every standard of professional decency and public morals, Colonel McCormick has earned the right to retire from the publishing business. I hope the people of Chicago will help him to exercise it.

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OUR worst suspicions about the air- and ocean-mail contracts awarded under the Hoover Administration are being confirmed daily before the Black committee, although, in justice to ex-Postmaster-General Walter Brown, it must be conceded that his story about finding the missing official correspondence in his cellar probably has contributed more to the gaiety of the nation than any episode since Hoover's prophecy about grass growing in the streets. But that, together with General Atterbury's description of Brown as "frank, candid, and straightforward," and the filibuster which Dave Reed conducted in the Senate while Brown was awarding an ocean-mail contract to a tight little crew of Pennsylvanians, is virtually the only relief in a putrid spectacle. Aside from all the waste, favoritism, and graft that have been exposed, the situation has an aspect which strikes me as particularly ominous. I apprehend that we are in for a war with Japan, and I anticipate that it may be decided in the air. I am interested in that prospect, if for no other reason than the likelihood that I and my two sons will be in it. What is the condition of our air forces? It ought to be excellent. Since 1926 the government has paid out about $90,000,000 in air-mail subsidies. It was paid on the pretext of encouraging an "infant industry," but most of us knew it was spent for national defense, in the belief that it would promote the development of more efficient planes. In the last few days we have learned that a large part of it went to officers of the National City Bank. It went for the payment of enormous salaries and bonuses, and to enhance

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stock values. On the strength of an original investment of $460 cash in Pratt and Whitney, engine manufacturers, Fred Rentschler and George Mead have taken salaries, bonuses, and profits totaling more than $18,000,000, and still own stock with a market value of about $3,000,000. Less impressive, but stranger in some respects, is the case of young Charles Deeds, whose father resigned a colonelcy in the army air corps to engage in commercial aviation. In consequence of a $40 investment, this fortunate youth has received about $2,000,000. For approximately one year Pratt and Whitney's principal, if not its only, customers were the army and navy! The fabulous profits which these men reaped were due to the company's uncanny ability to sell engines to the government, and its successor's ability to get lucrative mail contracts. Some interesting indictments are in prospect as this is written. Incidentally, the inquiry has served to focus attention on the choicest pair of New England boobs seen here in a generation. I allude to Senators Austin of Vermont and White of Maine. They don't even know enough to stay away, and their attempts to "cover up" for Brown and his favorites are ludicrously ineffective. You wouldn't catch a Lenroot or a Smoot within two blocks of a hearing that had grown as hot as this one has.

* * * * *

THE food and drug lobby has lost none of its boldness, its latest step being to cause the introduction of a "substitute" for the Tugwell-Copeland bill. It is called the Beal bill, and was offered in the house by Loring Black, of Brooklyn—who should be thoroughly ashamed of himself. The bill is a transparent fraud, and would actually weaken the provisions of the miserably inadequate existing law. For criminal prosecutions it would substitute a sort of weak-kneed "cease and desist" practice, with endless rights of appeal and argument. Thus the lofty altruist who advertised and sold horse liniment as a remedy for tuberculosis would be afforded ample opportunity to persuade the Secretary of Agriculture that horse liniment is really a remedy for tuberculosis, and allowed to continue its sale as such while he argued the point. False claims would be prohibited if offered as statements of fact, but not if presented as expressions of opinion! Cosmetics would be banned only when "imminently dangerous." Just how dangerous "imminently dangerous" is, I am not prepared to say. Perhaps fatal—in which case the bill would not apply to an eyelash dye which destroys the eyes. The lobbyists who are out to get Rex Tugwell's scalp for threatening their sacred right to poison for profit don't know the big bad wolf in the White House. They will get the shock of their lives when Roosevelt creates the post of Under Secretary of Agriculture expressly as a reward to Tugwell for his work on the bill. The country editors who send me abusive letters because of my gentle remarks on the subject might save their tempers and my time. I care nothing about the opinions of such vermin. Neither, to digress, am I impressed by Carter Glass's argument that 16,000 private bankers in this country should have been permitted to take a profit of four billion dollars on their gold reserves as the direct result of a change of governmental policy. If anyone has thought of a surer way to precipitate a revolution, he has omitted to mention it.

# The Milk Trust Gets the Cream

By ALEXANDER KENDRICK

BLOOD has mingled with milk again, and dairy farmers who were to have been stilled by fair-price provisions in the marketing codes and agreements of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration have once more broken out into insurrection. It is a continuation of last year's revolt and it presages more trouble ahead in the form of price wars and new strikes. In Illinois, Wisconsin, and California the rebellion has been an active, violent one, like those in Iowa and New York State last year; in the East the new uprising has been more restrained but none the less real and dangerous.

The revolt is of two types: first, against the government; and, second, against the powerful distributors, universally characterized by the farmers as the "milk trust." Fundamentally both are the same revolt, for dissatisfaction with the government arises from its condonation of unfair practices carried on by the distributors. But whether against government or distributor, whether in California or Pennsylvania, the reason for agrarian unrest is the same—the AAA marketing agreements simply did not do what they were presumably designed to do. The more outspoken farm leaders charge that this was effected deliberately, by the influence of the distributors.

The Chicago situation, most recent in the public eye, may be taken as generally typical. Belatedly the government has recognized the underlying fault, and in the new codes being formulated both the producer and the consumer will get fairer treatment by a slicing off of both ends of the middleman-distributor's huge profits. But the Chicago disturbances take on an added significance because they have forced the government to abandon its first price-fixing experiment almost before it was really under way. The price was fixed to both producer and consumer, but the retail price was too high and consumption was cut down. At the same time higher farm prices sent production up, a milk surplus was created, more milk was made into butter, and there was a consequent sag in the butter and cheese market, despite purchases made by the Surplus Corporation. Secretary Wallace now considers an experiment of this sort frankly unenforceable, and has said so through his new milk administrator, Jerry H. Mason.

In the first days of the new year, just as in the spring and fall of 1933, Chicago saw roads picketed, trucks dumped, trains halted, blood spilled, and the city's milk supply virtually dried up. This violent action was taken by some 18,000 organized dairy farmers, members of the Pure Milk Association, to protest price-cutting by chiseling dealers, generally chaotic conditions in the industry, and lack of effective control or enforcement. They carried on the strike for five days. Then the government stepped in with threats of pun-

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ishment for interference with interstate milk shipments, and the hard-hit dairies called a truce. There is to be some change in the farm price, cutting the present rate but setting a fixed figure, while the new retail price will be governed by the market and will be subject to the usual price-cutting fostered by cutthroat competition. This is a blow at the distributor and not at the farmer, and is thus a departure from former attempts at control.

It is generally accepted that the milk farmer is sadly underpaid, in most cases receiving less than the cost of production, but he is less aroused at this than at the wide spread between his price and what the consumer must pay at retail. This spread gives the distributor an enormous profit wholly out of proportion to the value of his bottling and delivering services. Even such a state of affairs could be, as it has been, tolerated if it were not for one salient fact: when retail prices are cut, the farmer's price is cut but the distributor's margin of profit remains the same or even increases. When retail prices are raised, on the other hand, the benefit is usually not passed on to the farmer; the distributor keeps it for himself. In 1929 the average net price to farmers was $2.56 per hundredweight; in 1932 it had shrunk to $1.32, almost half. Retail prices during the same period dropped 37 per cent and the middleman's profits only 18 per cent.

In Chicago last summer a retail price of ten cents per quart was set, and a farm price of $1.75 per hundredweight. The farmers immediately protested that this agreement was unfair, which it patently was. Under threat of further strikes, on November 3 it was amended to give the farmer $2.10. The distributors automatically passed the increase on to the consumer, raising the retail milk price to eleven cents and keeping their own profit margin. Whereupon the consumer not unjustifiably complained, and the milk bootlegger waxed fatter than ever at a retail price of seven cents. The whole agreement was thrown open for review, books of the distributors' and the producers' associations were audited by the government, and after Dr. Clyde L. King had resigned as federal milk administrator, the order to terminate the agreement came from Secretary Wallace, effective on January 1. The original dissension was laid to one serious blunder. The producers who signed the agreement represented the large cooperatives, which make up 75 per cent of the dairy-farm industry. The cooperatives have never protested against the large profits of the distributor for the simple reason that they are in large measure controlled by the large distributors' combines. It is only the independent farmer who has failed to make a living and shown resentment at his predicament.

The Chicago code went into effect on August 1 last, and immediately rode into a sea of trouble. Upon it were to be patterned the New York and Philadelphia codes and codes for the smaller cities, of which eleven have been abrogated and will be replaced. In all these agreements the production clauses were based on the theory that the dairy industry's ills arise from a lamentable surplus of milk, and that the only way to remedy this is to set aside a fixed amount sold by the farmer as "basic" milk and class the remainder of what he produces as "surplus" milk. "Basic" milk was to be used for fluid and drinking purposes, and to be paid for at a proportionately high price. "Surplus" milk was to be used for butter, cheese, and ice cream, and to bring a much smaller price. Unfortunately it was the distributor who was to decide which milk was which, and allot each farmer his fixed proportions of each. Moreover, there was no reason in the world why the distributor could not pay the farmer cheap "surplus" prices for the bulk of his milk, and then sell it as fluid milk at the highest prices.

This plan was so unfair that it has been abandoned for Chicago. The Philadelphia agreement, substantially the same, has also been canceled, as will be the New York agreement not yet completed. It must be understood that the Chicago truce is simply that—a mere stop-gap until the marketing agreements are revised, following public hearings. But farm leaders will attempt to incorporate their past gains in the new code and to obtain AAA enforcement of them. For the first time independent dairies, that is, those not belonging to the Chicago Milk Council, will pay for their milk on a minimum-price basis. These include dairies which refused to sign or abide by the August agreement. Universal licensing of distributors will also be sought.

Similar confusion has prevailed in the New York and Philadelphia areas. Since last year's strikes in New York State for increased farm prices, the producers have been patiently waiting for the completion of the milk-shed marketing agreement which was begun in August. But in the meantime a joint plan for New York and New Jersey, involving reduction of last year's production rate by 20 per cent, an interstate price agreement, and stabilization of the industry by licensing, is scheduled to become effective February 1. In Philadelphia the lines of dissension are more clearly defined. There the fight is against the allegedly monopolistic tendencies of the Interstate Milk Producers' Association, which represents 80 per cent of the marketed milk and is hand in glove with the powerful distributors' organization, the Philadelphia Milk Exchange. The Interstate has some 20,000 members, and the price it accepts is naturally forced upon the smaller farmers.

The Interstate in Philadelphia and the Dairymen's League in New York form the very heart of the milk trust. The former embraces the city of Philadelphia and its suburbs, twenty-four counties in Pennsylvania, eight in New Jersey, eleven in Maryland, three in Delaware, and two in West Virginia. The latter includes all of New York State and parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Connecticut. The two giant corporations banded together at the last session of the Pennsylvania legislature and won exemption from the authority of the new State Milk Control Board. The action of the legislature, incidentally, was universally termed a "sell-out."

At public hearings on the marketing code held last fall in Philadelphia, farmers charged that stock purchases in distributing corporations were forced upon them, allegedly to avert bankruptcy, and that then they were sold out by the milk trust; that the marketing pact was a fraud because it was drawn up by the distributors themselves (Dr. King's misadventures in the AAA tend to support this); and that the distributors even profited by the hauling rates forced upon the farmers. Cited as typical profits were those of the Supplee-Wills-Jones Company, largest dairy in the city. For eight years the average earnings were 25.5 per cent; in 1932 the company earned 20.2 per cent despite adverse economic conditions. The Scott-Powell Company had 20.8 per cent average earnings from 1925 to 1927, the Abbotts Dairy 17 per cent average earnings from 1927 to 1932 inclusive, and the Harbison Dairy 27 per cent average earnings from

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1925 to 1932. In 1922 this last company earned 38.2 per cent. It is pointed out that if the farmer had been paid one cent more per quart, the dairy profits would still have been far too great a proportion of the final retail price. The distributor, it was revealed, paid the farmer an average price of from three to four cents a quart for "basic" milk and sold it at eleven cents.

The Philadelphia milk-shed farmers demanded an audit of the Interstate's books, but before this could be done the federal government, by King's order, confiscated them, thus giving rise to further charges of favoritism. However, an independent audit was later conducted and this revealed: (a) that in the sixteen years covered by the books the price to the farmer fell much faster than the commodity index or the retail milk price; (b) that this price was usually less than the cost of production; (c) that meanwhile the distributor's spread increased steadily; and (d) that there was no effort to remedy this situation.

In the original marketing codes and in the proposed new agreements the approach is fundamentally the same. It is assumed that overproduction of milk is the underlying fault and that controlled production is the solution. As an inducement to cutting production, bonuses from processing taxes on dairy products, such as are now in effect on cotton, wheat, corn, hogs, and tobacco, are contemplated to the extent of $30,000,000. Also such proposals as reducing pasturage acreage, decreasing herds, raising butter-fat percentages in dairy products, restriction of domestic production, and importation of oleomargarine and other competitive products are being weighed as means of cutting down the surplus.

Is it necessary to repeat the cliché about overproduction and underconsumption? In Philadelphia the daily consumption of milk is less than half the amount health experts say is necessary for the welfare of children and adults. The real fault has been high retail costs, and although the AAA is attacking the problem from the other end, the result in this instance will presumably be the same. The retail price will go down; the farm price will remain constant.

The farmer sees in the new codes hope for that slight price improvement which is for him the difference between bankruptcy and prosperity. He also sees the end of the milk trust's market monopoly, for the producer and—wonder of wonders—the consumer are to have representation on local administrative agencies. But he may be too optimistic. Lax enforcement or non-enforcement of the codes will lead to price wars and more strikes and violence. If distributors persist in clamoring for fixed retail prices as well as fixed farm prices, the government's only recourse, as Secretary Wallace himself has said, is to put milk on a public-utility basis.

# New Shapes for Automobiles

By DOUGLAS HASKELL

THE question is being widely asked whether the new cars with their increased streamlining have not gone too far. The answer is easy: they have not gone far enough. Were the question one of style, then such an answer might well appear dogmatic; and it *would* have been a question mainly of style—at yesterday's speeds. But with the average cruising speeds of today, to fail to give the car the benefit of everything engineering knows about aerodynamics is to saddle the owner with inexcusable wastes of power and money. My 1930 Ford has a top speed of sixty miles, requiring a horse-power of forty; but the present-day Fords, with a speed of eighty miles, have eighty horse-power too. The speed is increased by a third; the horse-power has to be doubled. Those *extra* horse-power all go to pushing aside the air.

It is perhaps generally known that higher speeds set up immensely higher resistances. Five hundred of Major Seagrave's thousand horse-power in his record-breaking run at Miami are reported to have been expended against the air. A table shows the saving in horse-power through streamlining at various speeds:

| | *Horse-power required* | |
|---|---|---|
| *Miles an hour* | *Average 1933 car* | *Fully streamlined "Dymaxion"* |
| 10 | 2 | 2 |
| 30 | 9 | 6 |
| 50 | 27 | 13 |
| 70 | 62 | 25 |
| 125 | 301* | 90 |

(*This figure is disputed. Other estimates put it closer to 200.)

Since large jumps begin to occur between the speeds of thirty and seventy on the table, it is evident that real air-flowing need not even increase the speed to become highly effective. What the customer wants of it is to increase his fuel mileage and relieve his pocket-book. This the present models do, if at all, to so minor a degree that the gain is negligible. How serious their makers are in this direction may be judged by the fact that the sloping rear, which in aerodynamics would be important because it is here that the divided air is eased together again, frequently carries an exposed spare tire, to set up countless eddies and disturbances. Nor is a wedge-shaped hood, however stylish, the sign of streamlining but precisely its reverse, setting up an extra handicap for the laboring motor because of the big vacuum behind the broad back.

A thoroughbred streamlined car does to the standard product of today, even the most advanced, pretty much what the car of today did to the old horseless buggy. It makes you marvel that anything up to date could have been so clumsy. Like the buggy, the best of 1934 is by comparison an aggregate of bumps, nubbins, and skirts. Take a look, for example, at the fenders—how they flounce around the car like the brim of a sombrero! The thoroughbred has no curved dashboard, no polished brass lanterns—excuse me, I mean no hood, no protruding headlights and tire racks, no windshield, no fenders, and no running board. It is all car. All is incorporated into one graceful shape, a continuous line drawn from the nose to the tail, like the form of a whale or an airplane fuselage.

Two people have come out and offered such a model

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to the public. They are Buckminster Fuller and Starling Burgess. Their "Dymaxion" is mounted like an airplane on three wheels. Resemblance to a plane, let it be noted at once, is incidental and no intrinsic requirement of aerodynamics.

Though the motor of the Dymaxion for the present is a regular Ford motor, it is said to drive the heavier car at thirty miles on a gallon of gasoline. In this model it is mounted at the rear and drives the two wheels in front. The greatest advantage of the rear motor position is that the whole wide front of the car goes to the passengers. They have sumptuous space, particularly since the car, like a bus, extends full width out over the wheels, whose axle is long. This immense gain in space costs nothing in fuel, as we have seen, and very little in the length, which totals nineteen feet against the present average of fifteen. Indeed, such a gain in space converts the car itself into a vehicle different in kind. It becomes a motor Pullman. There is plenty of space for transverse beds. The tourist carries his own private, sheltered camp. And during the day he has the landscape back again that has been taken from him as windows have become mere slits over a high hood and under a low roof. He now once more commands a wide sweep. It is said that drivers will be afraid with no motor in front of them to take the shock of a collision, even though the car arches well forward; but they gain a far better visibility and control to avoid collision altogether.

I have not spoken of the other innovations of the year that deal with devices or gadgets. The reason is that a fundamentally good plan would eliminate most of the gadgets with their clutter, complication, and expense, while the devices, such as individual wheel-springing, would in any case have to be redesigned. Indeed, the whole exasperating complication about the clutch and gear-shift of today is a confession of the fundamental inadequacy of the transmission design. We should have to shift no gears at all. The basic gear-shift system with its three "speeds," or ratios between engine and wheels, was invented in 1885 by the Frenchman Lavassor, and at that time was already apologized for by him. He said it was the best he could do for the moment, although really "barbarous." He was an engineer.

The transmission of the future must be of an automatic type that permits the motor to select its own best "speed" or ratio. It will do for low speeds what air-streaming does for higher ones. The art of designing such a transmission is still experimental, but science is positive on the effect of such a result. E. S. Hall has made the most thorough of several studies. In a paper read before the Metropolitan Section, Society of Automotive Engineers, his conclusion was:

> Now that we know that gasoline mileage can be increased more than 150 per cent with no sacrifice whatever in convenience or performance, who has the crust to say, "No one is interested in fuel economy"? It may even be possible to sell the sales department the idea that the public would buy cars capable of doing better than forty miles to a gallon with faster acceleration and top speed, and with a simpler and safer control system, even if new standards of appearance and beauty must be accepted at the same time. All these improvements in performance are clearly within reach by using an engine of half the size now used, in combination with real streamlining, light weight, and the continuously variable transmission properly controlled.

# In the Driftway

MOST of his readers, the Drifter makes bold to believe, have heard of Alexander Hamilton. If not, the Drifter will not attempt to enlighten them. But how many have heard of Andrew Hamilton? The Drifter does not see many hands raised. Indeed, he had never heard of A. H. either until the New York County Lawyers' Association unveiled a tablet in his memory the other day. For some time the New York County Lawyers' Association has excited the Drifter's curiosity. It put up a good-looking new building not long ago almost next door to the offices of *The Nation*. The building has massive front doors, but nobody ever seems to go in or out of them. Perhaps, like a speakeasy, the building has a back door actually used by the membership in coming or going, for lawyers have a passion for indirection.

* * * * *

FROM all accounts, A. H. is worthy of a tablet. He was a distinguished advocate of Philadelphia back in colonial days when we all lived under the King, and in his off time from lawyering he designed Independence Hall, which if any dumb-bell has not heard of he oughter. But A. H. did more for independence than design it a hall. He argued the first great case for freedom of the press in this country, and established rights in that respect half a century before they were defined in the federal Constitution. According to Harry Weinberger, who at the unveiling of the tablet made a fiery and eloquent speech (the Drifter did not hear it but he knows Harry), John Peter Zenger established in 1733 the New York *Weekly Journal,* in opposition to the colonial government. Like a certain weekly journal of modern times which need not be exactly identified, Zenger's newspaper raised considerable—shall the Drifter say Hades?—and took large chunks of hide off sundry officials. Some of them missed it, being thin skinned, and complaint was made to the Chief Justice that Zenger's newspaper was a disturber of the peace. The grand jury refused an indictment, but the Committee of Council ordered some of Zenger's newspapers to be burned by the common hangman near the pillory of the city. Later Zenger was arrested and held in jail until a second grand jury also refused to indict him. He then expected to be released, but the Attorney-General charged him by information with printing "a false, malicious, seditious, scandalous libel." Two lawyers representing Zenger were disbarred for challenging the jurisdiction of the court. Zenger's friends then besought Andrew Hamilton to undertake the defense. Although eighty years of age, he consented, and argued the case without fee in 1735. The Chief Justice contended that the truth of a libel could not be pleaded as a defense in a criminal action. Hamilton cited British precedent to the contrary and his client was acquitted by the jury.

* * * * *

THE Drifter thinks it is of some significance that a tablet should be unveiled to a friend of free speech in this day when so many assaults are being made upon the principle. At the same time the Drifter feels that the slogan "freedom of speech," like every other slogan, should be re-

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examined occasionally, lest it come to be a mere shibboleth or a cloak for little-understood abuses. The Drifter agrees with Carl Becker, who in *The Nation* of January 24 pointed out that the most obvious manifestation of free speech today is the vulgarization and corruption of the public mind by radio, movie, and newspaper in the interest of private profit. The Drifter wonders, too, how much reality there is for the average individual in the principle of free speech today. Difficulties of distribution prevent the consumption of ideas as they do the consumption of merchandise. Freedom of circulation, not merely of utterance, is required to transmit thought, and the channels of transmission are closely held, mostly for commercial purposes. If any reader of the Drifter doubts this, let him try to publicize any idea without the backing of a good many persons or a good deal of money.

THE DRIFTER

# Correspondence

## In Defense of Zweig, Mann, and Others

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

So good a case can be made against those German writers who, after the accession of Hitler, betrayed their spiritual trust that it ill becomes Herbert Solow to pick the wrong men and to resort to the half-truths, ambiguities, and dubious reasoning that mark his article, German Writers Say "Yes," in your issue of January 17.

Mr. Solow says that "one thing is clear: an overwhelming majority of writers known as 'pure artists' or as friends of liberalism . . . have accepted 'coordination.' Though safe outside of Germany and enjoying relative ease and comfort, they jumped the minute Hitler cracked the whip in their direction." That's plain enough. Who are they? He names, in praise or blame, twenty-nine living writers of German, Austrian, Czech, and Russian birth: ten of them are conservatives (including Ewers, author of a life of Horst Wessel, and Johst, who is responsible for the play "Schlageter," both advance agents for nationalism), congenital "coordinates." More than a dozen are mentioned with implied approval. Thus his "overwhelming majority" that responded to the whip is represented by Hauptmann (not an exile), Stefan Zweig (Austrian, but not so comfortably "safe outside Germany"), Thomas Mann, and Messrs. Döblin and Schickele.

None can quarrel with the way Mr. Solow disposes of Gerhart Hauptmann, whose tragedy is that he outlived his capacity for great performance. Hauptmann stayed home and did "knuckle under." Let us try to think of him for what he once meant to liberalism, as we try to remember the Clemenceau, not of Versailles, but of the Dreyfus case.

What is Mr. Solow's charge against Zweig, Mann, Schickele, and Döblin? That they withdrew their promise to contribute to *Die Sammlung,* a German literary monthly edited by Klaus Mann and published in Amsterdam. They had agreed to write for it upon being assured that the magazine would be literary and non-political. The first number appeared and the four withdrew. Mr. Solow disingenuously names some of the mild articles that have found space in *Die Sammlung* thus far (a very readable magazine, by the way), and allows one to surmise that it had been the editor's intention to produce the magazine on the level of those articles. He implies that at the crack of the German whip after the appearance of Number 1 the writers named backed away from the innocent *Sammlung.* This magazine, then, is Mr. Solow's touchstone. If an author contributes he is pure; if he withdraws he has "knuckled down" to Hitler. Mr. Solow brushes aside the reasons which the four distinguished men gave—their surprise at the political character of a paper that was to have been devoted solely to literature—and ascribes their defection to fear of Hitler. This of three men who have no hope or intention of going back to Germany and a fourth whose home is in Austria! Nowhere does Mr. Solow intimate that on page 1, number 1, volume 1 of *Die Sammlung* the editor—in his salutatory—arraigns Germany (very neatly, but yet in contradiction to his promise), saying, in part: "Whoever will take the trouble to follow our magazine will not be permitted to doubt where we, editors and contributors, stand. From the outset it will be clear where our hatred is directed and where we hope we may love."

Far from "knuckling down," Stefan Zweig refused to sign the declaration which the German government requires of authors; hence he faces the suppression of his work of almost thirty years. It was not his participation in *Die Sammlung* but his refusal to sign the declaration in August (*Die Sammlung* did not appear until September) that brought about the situation which Mr. Solow misrepresents, doubtless unwittingly. Zweig's letter, which Mr. Solow quotes with such relish, was a private one to the Insel Verlag, which, without permission, turned it over to the Reichsstelle. Perceiving how he would be misunderstood by the Solows of all lands Dr. Zweig made this statement through the Jewish Telegraphic Agency:

> To avoid all misinterpretation I wish to explain that the letter in question was addressed by me to the Insel Verlag, who have been my German publishers for more than a quarter of a century, in reply to their express inquiry, but I gave no authorization whatever for its publication, which might suggest an attempt on my part to secure for myself more favorable treatment in Germany.
>
> There is nothing further from my mind than the thought of shutting myself out from the common fate of my comrades and brethren in blood, and I would despise any attempt on my part to surrender my moral independence in return for any advantages whatsoever.
>
> It is true that I have refrained from taking a controversial attitude against present-day Germany, for controversy was never the medium of my artistic expression, but I have not the remotest intention of denying or canceling my attitude, and I declare openly and unambiguously that the fate of my comrades and brethren in blood is obviously a thousand times more important to me than all literature.

Does Mr. Solow still maintain that "Zweig, with his Salzburg estate [house and garden] and fat income from American best-sellers, has knuckled under"? And, knowing the honorable personal career of Dr. Mann and what he has suffered at the hands of the brutal German government, are we to discredit his simple explanation for allowing his book to appear in Germany? And Dr. Döblin, distinguished neurologist whose life was devoted to proletarians in Berlin, is he to be doubted? I happen to know and respect profoundly these three of the four maligned, and it is a safe inference that injustice has similarly been done to Herr Schickele.

*New York, January 16* B. W. HUEBSCH

## Mr. Solow Thinks Otherwise

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Mr. Huebsch misstates matters of fact. Ignoring Binding and other cases I cited, he says Ewers and Johst are "congenital coordinates." In the past Ewers was known as a liberal; in a preface to Zangwill's "Voice of Jerusalem" he declared

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undying respect for the liberal Jewish protagonist of national minorities. Johst wrote "Morgenröte—ein Rüpelspiel" ("Red Dawn—A Tough Play"), which pilloried capitalism, war, and love of country. In short, these Nazis once decried coordination with the best of them.

Mr. Huebsch misrepresents my fair characterization of *Die Sammlung*. I portrayed it neither as milder than it is nor as a touchstone of anti-Hitler irreconcilability. Of course I do not believe all its contributors are "pure." Pure what? But I do believe that those who, at Hitler's behest, retracted promises to contribute, are pure. Pure quitters.

Mr. Huebsch discusses many irrelevant matters. I do not see that one man's Austrian citizenship, a second's Czech parentage, a third's past career (I, too, heard Döblin publicly pledge himself to undying anti-Nazi militancy), or the fact that there is between a fourth and his publisher a difference as to whether a certain letter was private or not, changes the one essential fact.

Indeed, beneath all the verbiage, Mr. Huebsch seems to accept this fact. He seems to say that the four retreating horsemen were justified because Klaus Mann broke a promise not to arraign Germany. Let us assume such a promise was made and broken, although no proof is offered. What does this mean except that *they will write only for magazines which do not arraign Hitler Germany—and for German publishing houses bringing out books in praise of it?* But is this not the essence of my article? Then what's all the shooting for?

Apparently because of my "interpretation." I said these men jumped when Hitler cracked the whip, while Mr. Huebsch will have it that they discovered a desire to be "non-controversial" even before that. A noble defense indeed! But I quoted and did not try to discredit Thomas Mann's own "simple explanation" that he wanted to avoid the suppression of his next book. And I pointed out that Döblin and Schickele did not quit the *Sammlung* until their publishers informed them that all its collaborators were to be banned in Germany.

Stefan Zweig's desire to be "non-controversial" also is part of coordination. Previously he was controversial, both as a Jewish nationalist and as Rolland's spokesman. Zweig says his comrades' fate is "important" to him. If he means that he is touched by their misery, I never doubted it. But he will not condemn their tormentors or support Klaus Mann's condemnation by giving the *Sammlung* even a non-controversial piece. To associate with anti-Hitlerites is politics. But to publish books through a firm whose editorial policy is controlled by Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry—that is pure art! In truth, none of these men has simply quit. They have not abandoned life or letters, as might a really "pure" artist in a sinning world where every action may have implications beyond our vision or control. They have become parts of coordinated German literature, roses as ever, no doubt, but roses in a charnel house.

Perhaps when Mr. Huebsch's firm publishes Zweig's "Erasmus" we will get more about Zweig's motives, refracted through an analysis of the Great Humanist's soul-state when he turned tail after a proto-Nazi reaction had crushed the suffering rebel peasants of Germany. And perhaps Döblin, also published by Mr. Huebsch's house, will give us the neurology of his action in his next book. In the meantime, the objective facts are clear. I do not "relish" them, but I insist on stating them. If Mr. Huebsch wants to forget them, as he proposes to do in Hauptmann's case, his is the privilege. But let him not misrepresent them or obfuscate them.

*New York, January 20* HERBERT SOLOW


*2nd Printing!*

# SEX HABITS

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# Books, Films, Drama

## A Night in Late Winter

By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

The opposite roofs blind half my window;
they leave me four square feet of glass on sky
a lens enough to show infinity;
and in a notch between two housewalls, looking west,
I have a trap to catch the sunset.

Tonight, swollen and luxurious he sinks;
blue darkness, last of his lavish colors,
mantles him dreaming, while neat new light
is by the unclouded eastern moon laid on.

Tonight, though it's named winter on the calendar,
the mild air has an after winter feel,
a smell of water leaving ice, a live grass smell
to deodorant winter alien.

And heavier savors still, less soluble in air,
gush upward from the thaws; thick relishes of soil
as if, invisibly, earth in sleep has turned
its cold side under and brought up the warm.

## The Comic Genius of Dickens

*Charles Dickens. His Life and Work.* By Stephen Leacock. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $3.

AT the end of the nineteenth century the intellectuals—influenced by French naturalism and not yet under the spell of Dostoevski, who owed so much to Dickens—dismissed Dickens as naive, provincial, and unrealistic. But this fashion passed, and there are now few readers who do not understand the true nature of Dickens's genius or who would bother to weigh his obvious inability to portray normal reality against his tremendous ability in the creation of the grotesque and comic. Dickens stands for us today with Breughel, Daumier, Cervantes, and the Falstaffian Shakespeare as one of the great comic artists.

As such he is not easy to write about, for great comedy does not yield easily to paraphrase. One can always find the "idea" in a tragedy, but the effect of the great comic conceptions surpasses any idea they may seem to have. This, perhaps, is because great comedy is usually concerned with the physical, which is easier to represent than to discuss; but whatever the reason, one can understand why both Chesterton and Machen (for all their limitations they were the first to point out the true nature of Dickens's genius) talked a great deal about the "mythical" quality of Dickens's best characters. These characters exist so strongly and fully that the two critics felt they must "stand for" something greater and not quite comprehensible—that they were "mythical." But actually the characters "stand for" nothing more than some special human energy, or oddity, or feeling, which has no wider reference than the individual who possesses it.

Dickens's genius for creating such people is, in conjunction with his role of social propagandist, of peculiar interest for the modern writer. Dickens's social views would not, of course, stand the test of the mildest modern liberalism, but in his time and place he was rather admirable—and as practically effective as a novelist can be. One may say in general of his social propaganda that it was successful both aesthetically and practically only when his characters had the "mythical" quality mentioned before, when they had a reality so strong that they seemed like creatures of the earth. When, on the other hand, he dealt in caricature and made his characters represent an idea, he failed both aesthetically and practically; the quality and fate of "Hard Times" with its Gradgrind and Bounderby of Coketown, cartoons of the British Whig middle class, furnish the obvious example.

Our time is one when, necessarily, ideas about people are more pressing than the personalities of people. A large and very important section of our intellectuals demands, with great justice, that our novels include these ideas about people, that they deal in social propaganda. Yet a large part of this group seems to feel that there is a necessary antagonism between ideas about people and the personality of people, and that the best way the novelist can propagandize is without his chief tool—his perception of personality in all its myriad variations. Thus, in the *New Masses* of February, 1933, the Communist critic A. B. Magil chides the excellent Communist novelist Grace Lumpkin for her "objectivity" in character drawing, tells her that she is wrong to attribute any decent feelings to a man who is led to desert his class to be the agent of big business, and that she should deal only in "class portraiture"—that is, in caricature. Mr. Magil's notion of character and the determinants of action are so obviously non-Marxian that one is sure that his view is not shared by the clearer minds of the Communist group, yet his view represents an extreme toward which opinion on this matter seems inevitably to tend. The work of Dickens, in its failure as well as its success, stands as a proof of the limitation which this view sets on the effectiveness of the novelist.

But the making of real people and not mere social units and types is not only a tool of the propagandist-novelist; it is also in itself a social function. Because circumstances force us to think, for the sake of action, of people in the mass, we need not suppose that this has an ultimate social virtue. It is not desirable—no Communist would say it was—for people to be social units. And it is one part of the novelist's function to tell us that they are not—to remind us that people are incredibly different, various, eccentric, and that they should be so. The necessity to think politically in terms of masses has been carried over with illegitimate literalness into art, and the creation of character is vaguely felt to be a sin. Yet it is a real question whether the great revolutionary novel will not come quite close to Dickens's vital practice; certainly it will be far from Mr. Magil's hysterical theory.

With so much relevance attached to Dickens by present circumstances and movements, it is a pity that his most recent biographer should be Professor Leacock. That this "Life" is almost entirely built of the bricks the monumental Forster provided is no great fault; but it has scarcely a flash of insight or a new emphasis; it is disproportionate, gracelessly written, and repetitious. There are all the old tags about Dickens's inability to draw a gentleman—"an A-1, first-class, all-round gentleman," as Mr. Leacock elegantly puts it. There is a certain amount of misinformation, such as that "in all the records of [Dickens's] comings and goings there are no surreptitious pages"; Ralph Straus shows that there are. The book concludes with a vulgarly violent assertion of the superiority of Dickens over Shakespeare and Milton, and is, on the whole, as poor a monument as Dickens could have.

LIONEL TRILLING

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# Insanity and Heredity

*Heredity and Environment: Studies in the Genesis of Psychological Characteristics.* By Gladys C. Schwesinger. The Macmillan Company. $4.

THE man on the street does not question that insanity is inherited; Eugene O'Neill has created a profound tragedy about the tacit assumption that insanity is inherited; Hitler is preparing to make sterile thousands of men and women because his German professors tell him that insanity is inherited. In the face of such unanimity it is perhaps foolhardy to doubt, for surely the evidence behind this massed authority must be as clear and ponderous as that behind the laws of gravity. But those of us who still dare to doubt and who wish to examine the data as well as the conclusions will welcome Miss Schwesinger's book, which she describes as "a reference work on psychological measurement and a summary of studies on the developmental origins of mental characteristics."

Miss Schwesinger begins with a careful description and critique of the numerous tests which have been devised to measure intelligence and personality. These tests are the tools that are used in studies on this subject, and it is paramount to determine their validity. Intelligence tests, she finds, if used properly, are "highly valid and reliable." Less encouraging is her opinion of personality tests, which she believes are of questionable value in their application to eugenics.

Most of the book is composed of a painstaking analysis of the data on intelligence as affected by heredity and environment. This section alone has a bibliography of 229 titles. Studies are divided into two groups: those with similar heredity and varied environment, and those with similar environment and varied heredity. For example, one group of investigators has compared the intelligence of identical twins—signifying identical heredity—who have been reared apart; other studies compare children from widely different backgrounds brought up together in asylums or resident schools. Miss Schwesinger attempts not only to present this mass of data but also to indicate the significance and value of each study. From her skilful analysis she forms the opinion that "the evidence that there are important differences among individuals in hereditary capacity for intelligence, is entirely conclusive." With this we must agree. It is now a truism that all men are not born equal.

What of the role of environment? Its task is to bring out the latent abilities of the individual. Obviously, then, its effects are more potent on the superior individual who has more to be brought to the surface. Miss Schwesinger presents this aspect of the problem with refreshing clarity:

> Hence it is really not legitimate to ask: What is the relative importance of heredity and environment? This question belongs in the scrap basket with the type of general conclusions in some of the studies quoted: "It appears that heredity is twice as important as environment in determining intelligence." The new approach would be: Given a stated environment, how much variation will heredity permit for such and such a characteristic (among so and so individuals)? Or, given a stated heredity, how much variation could a given range of environment introduce for such and such a character?

Among the environments studied is the social and economic status. That, on the whole, individuals, both children and adults, from the so-called higher classes have higher I.Q.'s than individuals from the lower classes is a well-established fact. More important is to find the reason for this difference. It is disappointing that in a book which maintains so high a critical standard we should read that this higher intelligence of the "upper socio-economic groups, as compared with groups lower in the socio-economic scale, is to an important extent due to differences in hereditary capacity." The data on which this conclusion is based are mainly statistical and far from convincing. There is not enough space here to discuss in detail this vital question, but it may be emphasized that the use of statistics assumes the unquestionable reliability of the fundamental observations. Certainly in so complex a problem as social and economic status too many unknown and unmeasurable factors are involved for us to jump to so momentous a conclusion as that quoted above, merely on the basis of a few statistical investigations.

To return now to the problem of the heredity of insanity, for which we were seeking scientific support. Miss Schwesinger informs us that she would have been delighted to supply a chapter on the influence of environment in the development of personality (which includes mental illness) but that "unfortunately the factors underlying personality development are as yet so incompletely understood by psychologists, the tools of measurement so inadequate, the research data so meager and insecure, that we did not feel justified in organizing such an analysis." Apparently, whatever may be the basis of this generally accepted idea of the heredity of insanity, it is not a matter of scientific proof.

This is not an easy book to read. Miss Schwesinger has performed a masterly work of scholarship in bringing together the widely scattered works on this subject. Her bibliographies and indexes are exhaustive. Serious students are working against great difficulties to answer the nature-nurture problem. The material is such that their results are often incomplete and unsatisfactory, but they are definite in the direction they indicate. The least we can do, as educators, social workers, physicians, and even statesmen, is to familiarize ourselves with what has been done and to keep our conclusions within the limits of the proved results. Toward this end Miss Schwesinger's book is an invaluable aid.

DAVID BERES

# Aristocratic Verse

*Now with His Love. Poems.* By John Peale Bishop. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP is a poet of high technical accomplishment, and this book of lyrics and dramatic monologues proves him to be one of those poets to whom form and method are of great importance. It proves, likewise, that he is one of the poets of the "lost generation." One sees here the influence of Wallace Stevens, of E. E. Cummings, even of Edith Sitwell. Nevertheless, Mr. Bishop's art is his own. His tradition is quite evidently aristocratic. He prefers the fine, the delicate, the rare in character or in performance. Several of the poems have to do with the aristocracy of the South. I do not think, however, that one can accuse Mr. Bishop of snobbery. Through these poems runs the realization that, regardless of preference, the time has come when the fine flower of aristocracy is decadent, that terrible though this process may be, aristocracy must now be reinvigorated by contact with more primitive and ignorant classes. The poet may greatly prefer Desdemona to the Moor, but

> The ceremony must be found
> That will wed Desdemona to the huge Moor.

The poet may find dramatic the beautiful Southern woman who has her slaves brought to her bedside and beaten, but this woman is dying. Mr. Bishop is well aware that the object studied changes as the student changes. Nor can he find any permanent value in anything. He cannot seize upon religion as a solution. But he would not separate ideal love from lust; he would merely have both present in their right proportion.

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Mr. Bishop's feeling about human society is that it is, on the whole, very stupid and rather crude. He finds in literature rare people much more exciting than any broad conception of the human race. He shrinks a little from the common herd, but he does not entirely deny them.

So much for the poet's thought. Primarily Mr. Bishop is a lyric poet of considerable rank. His adaptations of Elizabethan rhetoric and turns of phrase to modern psychology are very interesting. Like Cummings he uses the rich and the delicate image to point a modern cynicism. Such are the poems to Fiametta, and to his Late Mistress. In general, Mr. Bishop does not use the conversational rhythms so common to his generation or the effects of direct speech, but rather delicate song rhythms and an Elizabethan poetic language greatly modified, of course, to attain modern emphasis on idea. Often his imagery reminds one of Wallace Stevens, but his musical effects are less subtle. He does not stress disillusionment or mental bewilderment. His appeal is directly to the senses.

EDA LOU WALTON

# Palmer Turns State's Evidence

*With My Own Eyes.* By Frederick Palmer. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $3.50.

FREDERICK PALMER has seen more war than any other American and probably more than any Englishman except Henry W. Nevinson. Ever since 1897, when he was first a war correspondent in the war between the Greeks and Turks, he has been under fire with remarkable regularity in Cuba, China, the Balkans, the Philippines, and Manchuria, and of course he was in the World War from the beginning to the end, part of the time as chief censor for the A. E. F., a position that he took as a patriotic duty though it irked his very soul. Always, he says, hope has kept him alive—hope that somehow or other the barbarities, the human atrocities he has witnessed all over the globe would come to an end. He was one of those who wanted us in the war, who really hoped we should make the world safe for democracy—until the Peace Conference. As he was leaving the Hotel Crillon after a look at that horrible and disastrous conference, Professor Haskins of Harvard said to him, "Palmer, what are you going to do, now there will be no more wars?" "From what I have seen of the Peace Conference," he replied, "I am convinced that more wars are already in the making." While he ends on the note "I still hope," his bitter disillusionment is everywhere evident.

Mr. Palmer cannot forgive President Wilson for riding in triumph through the streets of the capitals of Europe and never even visiting the Meuse-Argonne to see what the men he had drafted "had endured in defeating the enemy so that he could make peace without victory. . . . Once he was won to counsel with the statesmen instead of the spirit of the soldiers, the statesmen had him." To Mr. Palmer, Lloyd George seems only "the war's playboy," whose god was a "gyrating Janus"; Clemenceau, one "who had no room for idealism in his cosmos"; Orlando, "greedy and grasping." Lord Robert Cecil he characterizes correctly as the strong partisan of the League of Nations who, with "Bible in hand," was "making sure that under the new disguise of colonial rule called a mandate Britain got all the African diamond fields and the oil wells of Mesopotamia." "To read the Covenant of the League," Mr. Palmer writes, "was to break the heart of a practical pacifist." As for Mr. Wilson, Mr. Palmer thinks that he lost because "the strong cards in his hands had turned blank. His power had slipped from his hands. It had been in the manhood, the money, the munitions which the Allies had counted on to help them in the war." But there I think he is wrong. Those cards were still powerful when the conference began. Mr. Palmer forgets how many millions we lent to our Allies *after* the Armistice and *after* the conference began—how the French and British armies were disintegrating, and our own too, though they were still the freshest and at that time the most formidable in France. But he is everlastingly right when he says that "a few leaders were on the top of the world; they were drunk with a power whose source they did not understand," and so the world was wrecked instead of saved, and the end of their mischief is not yet.

Mr. Palmer, who successfully labored, with General Pershing's willing cooperation, to keep hate and atrocities out of the American dispatches from the front while the home forces were teaching nothing else, does his share, like Philip Gibbs and others, to undo the war-time atrocity stories. There were no Belgian children's hands cut off, and no German bodies burned to make grease, and no Canadian sergeants crucified to barn doors. Those were merely inventions to increase recruiting—and drive the innocent and stupid Americans into participating in the loss of a World War. Mr. Palmer does not deny that the censors' task is one of suppression and lying and deceit, but it is pleasant to record that he did the minimum himself, and that in this volume he has laid all the cards on the table in the grim determination of his disappointment. He has turned not merely state's evidence, but humanity's evidence.

The World War episodes are only a portion of his book. Mr. Palmer's accounts of his experiences in the Boxer and Philippine campaigns are of real historical worth, and his sketches of the generals with whom he was thrown are illuminating. His is an amazingly varied record.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

# The Survival of Poor-Law Standards

*The Development of Social Insurance and Minimum-Wage Legislation in Great Britain.* By Helen F. Hohman. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

THIS, in my opinion, is the most illuminating study of British social legislation which has appeared in the last twenty years. It gives in the first place an accurate and lucid analysis of the various measures themselves. But more revealing than this is the way in which it shows how the philosophy of the Poor Law of 1834, although apparently discredited, still so largely survives after a century and continues to influence the later acts and their administration. That law, as is well known, was the quintessence of individualism. It was based on the assumption that poverty was due to the personal fault of the poor, and that the government should give as little aid as possible on the most onerous terms in order to stimulate the self-reliance of the submerged. The law therefore provided that relief to the able-bodied poor should be offered only if they gave up their homes and came into the workhouse. The relief given there was in turn supposed to be appreciably less than the lowest standard of living of the unskilled workers. The workhouses were therefore designed to be places of qualified terror which were to deter the workers from committing the crime of being indigent.

The severity of this standard was, to be sure, somewhat abated during the nineteenth century. In some regions the aged were not required to enter the poorhouse and were given meager doles of relief. Furthermore, the poor-law authorities soon discovered that for them to feed, clothe, and shelter those within the workhouse on a lower standard than the lowest outside would generally require them slowly to starve the inmates to death and thus be guilty of legalized manslaughter. It also be-

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gan to be realized that the poor were not to blame for industrial accidents, cyclical, seasonal, or even chronic unemployment, ill-health, or indigent old age.

Despite the protests of the cold-hearted Charity Organization Society, the rigors of the old poor law as an omnibus measure for treating poverty began therefore to dissolve around the turn of the century. Finally the Liberals under the leadership of Lloyd George put through a program of social insurance and legislation which was designed as the first-line trench against destitution. Unemployment and health-insurance laws were passed, old-age pensions were provided, and trade boards were set up to fix minimum wages in sweated trades. To these the Conservatives added in 1925 assistance for widows with children. These were worthy measures, but to prevent malingering and to promote thrift the scale of benefits provided followed the 1834 principle of less eligibility, and were appreciably less than current rates of earnings and very much below the cost of a minimum approved standard of life. Similarly the minimum rates fixed by the trade boards were also below these minimum living standards. A bottom was, to be sure, placed under human misery but adequate maintenance was not provided. It is small wonder, then, that the workers are not satisfied with these measures of liberal social reform and that the Labor Party has sought to increase the benefits provided. It is also small wonder that there is a growing feeling that if this is all that capitalism can do to protect its workers, then a socialistic reorganization of industry is needed which will really give a living wage to those employed and adequate maintenance to those who, through no fault of their own, are either unable to find work or are industrially incapacitated. The coming century will probably see in England a clash of this concept with the present compromise, and Mrs. Hohman's book is very valuable both in showing the issues involved and in tracing their historical development.

PAUL H. DOUGLAS

# George Lewes

*George Lewes and George Eliot. A Review of Records.* By Anna T. Kitchel. The John Day Company. $2.50.

IN the late spring of 1870, when she was eighteen years old, Mary Arnold was invited to one of the Sunday suppers of Mark Pattison, the Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford. Also present were two eminent Victorians who were visiting the Pattisons. "George Eliot sat at the Rector's right hand," Mary Arnold tells us. "I was opposite her; on my left was George Henry Lewes, to whom I took a prompt and active dislike. He and Mrs. Pattison kept up a lively conversation. . . . George Eliot was in truth entirely occupied in watching or listening to Mr. Lewes."

The impression which Lewes made on Mary Arnold is the impression, I suspect, which many readers of books about George Eliot and of letters and memoirs of the period have formed of him. Mrs. Carlyle called him "the Ape"; Margaret Fuller spoke of his "sparkling shallowness"; and George Meredith dismissed him as a "mercurial little showman." Yet every anecdote testifies, as this one does, to George Eliot's devotion to him. Too often, however, in the glimpses we get of George Eliot's later days, he appears as a superior kind of secretary to the famous woman who was not his wife. Professor Kitchel has now taken a new approach to this "union": she deals with Lewes's early life instead of George Eliot's; and even after they begin their life together, she writes of them rather from Lewes's point of view.

Lewes emerges as a versatile journalist with a vigorous and attractive personality of his own. He was a contributor of articles on literary, philosophical, and scientific subjects to the magazines. He also published several novels and biographies. He wrote a play, acted in it and in others, adapted plays from the French, wrote criticism not only of English but also of French, Spanish, Italian, and German drama. In 1850 Lewes helped to establish a liberal weekly, the *Leader,* became its literary editor, and even conducted in it an early "column"; later he occupied editorial positions on the *Cornhill Magazine* and the *Fortnightly Review.* Like Leigh Hunt in the previous generation he was a liberalizing force in the intellectual life of his time. It is the light which Miss Kitchel throws on Lewes's early career, the life of a busy London journalist in the forties and fifties, that is her chief contribution. Little new light is thrown on George Eliot. The truth is that George Eliot did not lead a very interesting life—that is, externally. Her real life was poured into her novels: "Elle se transvasait goutte à goutte, jusqu'à la lie." What George Eliot needs today is not the "review of records" which Miss Kitchel gives us, nor a biography in the style of M. Maurois, but a critical study of her mind and art.

Miss Kitchel's book would have been more valuable, I think, if she had analyzed the significance of those records. The latter part of her review becomes at times scarcely more than a transcript or summary of records already available in Cross's "Life." One important question, one among many, which I wish Miss Kitchel had taken the opportunity of analyzing is the attitude of Victorian society toward the "union" of Lewes and George Eliot. Miss Kitchel "records," for instance, the visit to the Pattisons which I have already glanced at: "On the twenty-fifth," she writes, "they went for three days to Oxford to visit the Rector of Lincoln and his wife"; but she leaves it at that, not even mentioning the name of the formidable Rector. Yet behind this brief statement lies a wealth of significance. Here, in the first place, is the head of an Oxford college entertaining a woman whom Charles Kingsley referred to as "the infidel *esprit fort,* who is now G. H. Lewes's concubine." Pattison even invites a young girl of eighteen to meet this woman who is openly living in adultery. But still another kind of significance is to be found in this visit. In the late spring of 1870 George Eliot had just begun "Middlemarch," in which, you will remember, Casaubon, the elderly scholar, has a young and beautiful wife. Now Pattison, as contemporaries were quick to hint, was also an elderly scholar, also with a young and beautiful wife; it is ironical, too, that his greatest work was to be a biography of Isaac Casaubon, the Elizabethan humanist. Though I cannot believe that George Eliot intended her Casaubon as a portrait of Pattison, is it not probable that she was "drinking in" impressions, as Mary Arnold actually pictures her doing on that visit to Oxford, storing them "in that rich, absorbent mind of hers"? If only Miss Kitchel had analyzed such questions as these, her book would have enlarged our understanding of George Eliot as much as it has our understanding of George Lewes.

FRANKLIN GARY

# Shorter Notices

*Yesterday's Burdens.* By Robert M. Coates. The Macaulay Company. $2.

Fantasy is the literary genre which this work most nearly approaches, although much of it recalls the type of autobiographical nature-description that we get in "The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft" and the essays of Robert Louis Stevenson. Written in a conventional, reiterative, and often quite stereotyped prose, these opening chapters render the mood of sentimental resignation in which the narator indulges in his idyllic Connecticut retreat. Typical both of the mood and the language is the particular sentence that is chosen as a kind of refrain

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device throughout: "The days go by in strict procession." Then, with almost no warning, the fantastic element enters in the person of the real hero of the piece, the man Henderson, who is not so much an individual character as he is a sort of composograph portrait of *l'homme moyen sensuel* of present-day New York. Unfortunately, Henderson is required to be so many different people that in the end he is just no one at all: as a symbol he has not enough delimiting contours to give him an identity for the imagination. Because he is without character, in the original sense of a stamp or mark to distinguish him from the rest of his kind, he hardly succeeds in being anything more than a name. And the style of this latter section, which is a hodge-podge of a half-dozen badly assimilated modern influences, serves to confirm the impression of a fundamentally confused response to the multiplicity of contemporary experience.

*Foreign Bonds: An Autopsy.* By Max Winkler. Roland Swain Company. $3.50.

The unsavory record of much that has occurred in government financing gains a long-needed historical treatment in this volume by Dr. Max Winkler. Of all persons connected either as participants or observers with the jamboree of foreign financing during the post-war decade, Dr. Winkler has perhaps the best title to the role of Cassandra. Had greater heed been given to his warnings when the high-pressure salesmanship of Wall Street was running wild with foreign bonds, American investors would now be the gainers by many millions of dollars which have since disappeared into foreign treasuries, into the pockets of unscrupulous office-holders, and into the coffers of the underwriters. To those who succumbed to roseate selling circulars Dr. Winkler's detailed account of the credit records of many nations whose bonds were sold here as gilt-edged securities will come as a bitter solace. In fact, Dr. Winkler's research into government financing since the days of the Romans shows that government bonds, although traditionally considered of the highest caliber because of their prima facie backing by all the national resources, are actually secured only by the intangible and frequently non-existent willingness of governments to fulfil past promises, and occasionally by the more realistic desire to maintain a good credit rating as the basis for future borrowing. The recital of unending defaults, arbitrary reductions of principal or interest, and general disregard of obligations demonstrates that in the long run a government can maintain a perfect credit history only by refraining from borrowing. As a fully documented record of government financing, Dr. Winkler's "autopsy" is of great value. As a means of enlightenment for the past and future investor, its general appeal is somewhat narrowed by the mass of technical detail which partly obscures the record of deceit and gullibility that characterized one of the most disastrous eras of modern capitalism.

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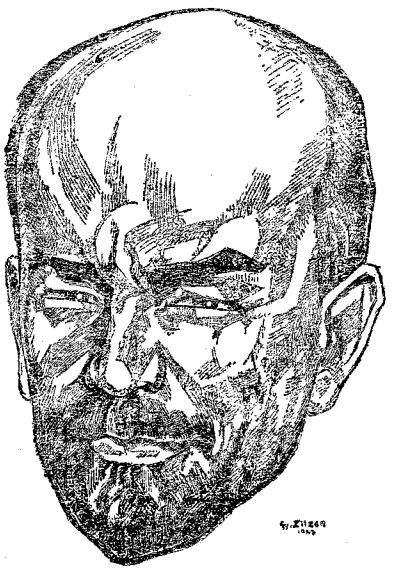

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# Films

## Toward the Next War

IF the question of propaganda in the films recurs with such frequency in this column, it is not because of any special desire to add to the vast confusion that has already accumulated around the general question of the relationship between propaganda and art. In that controversy I have already announced my belief that works of art and works of propaganda are quite different things, with different motives, objects, and characteristics. And all things being equal I should prefer to discuss the films as examples of what they now and then give evidence of aspiring to be, works of art, rather than as illustrations of one or another social or political doctrine. But the truth is that the time has come when the nature of the particular social or political philosophy reflected in a film, as in pretty much everything else nowadays, has such profound effects on its quality in other respects that we cannot for very long ignore this philosophy. The approach to the films as art usually involves for the most part the making of qualitative distinctions within the sphere of technical and aesthetic discussion. This is, and always has been, the proper sphere for the critic of art, in so far as he is a critic of art and not an amateur of social or economic theory. But the sphere of technical and aesthetic discussion is unfortunately not always so independent from other spheres of discussion as the critic, for his convenience, might like it to be. Even the forms of an art are related to the culture out of which it springs—more particularly, to the comparative state of health of that culture. And as long as our culture is in its present unsound condition we shall have to resign ourselves to a corresponding instability of formal structure in every one of the modes through which it attempts to express itself. That "antique symmetry" of which Leonardo wrote in his notebooks, and whose lack he regretted in his own creations, is not for an age of transition and change. It belongs to an age which no longer has to spend its energy in fighting—for what it has or for what it has not. It belongs, that is to say, to an age in which propaganda is no longer necessary, in which the critic is freed to return to his proper sphere. And our own, needless to say, is not such an age.

According to a recent alarming bulletin sent out by the Film and Photo League, for example, we are in for an overwhelming inundation of "war-preparation" films in the near future. Among recent pictures designed to stir up a pro-war spirit in the American public, the bulletin singles out the following: "Midshipman Jack," "Hell and High Water," "Hell Below," "Fledglings," "Son of a Sailor," and "Shanghai Madness." It points out also, what few may realize, that the showing of newsreels of marine, battlefield, and aviation maneuvers is encouraged by the government. Pointing out the marked technological improvement that has occurred in the films since the great anti-Soviet campaign in 1919, the bulletin concludes: "We can be sure that the utilization of the film by the ruling class in this coming period of war preparation will infinitely dwarf . . . their use of the movie in 1919."

It is largely in relation to this melancholy possibility that a picture like the international *tour de force* "Hell on Earth," which has just opened at the Acme, takes on its significance. Neither as art nor as entertainment will it yield many rewards, but as a piece of propaganda directed against the next capitalistic war it has at least one undeniable virtue. Its method of argument is so simple that even the most dull-witted in any audience will respond to its force. The method is to throw a handful of soldiers of different nationalities into a ruined build-



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ing in No Man's Land, and show exactly what happens. Of course their common sufferings, interests, and weariness with their lot erase almost instantly whatever differences of language or uniform have at first kept them apart. The German shares his cigarettes with the Frenchman; the Jew, who has been a tailor, mends the German's clothes; and the American Negro, a former entertainer on the European music-hall stage, cheers everybody up with a lively tap-dance. The moral is clear and clean cut. There is nothing to which either a Communist or a pillar of the League of Nations might object. It is perhaps irrelevant, therefore, to complain that everything has been a little too abruptly managed, that this shell-hole camaraderie becomes tiresome and embarrassing after a while. But a greater amount of care would have made this picture interesting also as drama. With the exception of Ernst Busch (who played in "Kameradschaft") as the German and Vladimir Sokolov of the Moscow Art Theater as the Jew, the casting of the five soldiers is weak. Although the dialogue is written in no less than four languages, it does not accomplish very much in any one of them; that in English, at any rate, is quite poor. Nor does the idea of having the American Negro express the international point of view, while it is excellent as an idea, work out very well in fact. As a result of these defects and failures, "Hell on Earth" is not as effective, even as propaganda, as it might be; but unlike most war films it does express a clear and uncompromising attitude toward its subject.

It may be compared, for example, with the British film "I Was a Spy," which is having a certain vogue at the moment with the more exacting sections of the metropolitan audience. Thanks to a smooth though not exceptional technical production and to the suave playing of Madeleine Carroll and Herbert Marshall, this picture has been made to seem much more important than it really is, either as drama or as an exposé of one aspect of the late war. The main situation is the old reliable one of the woman spy who is required to sacrifice both love and virtue for the sake of her country. All that it manages to leave with its audience is an impression of the vast nobility that surrounds the life of a spy. Pathos is directed on the woman, not on the hundreds whom her noble patriotism has brought to death. In other words, it is the kind of picture calculated to make us believe that there is something beautiful and touching about war, after all.

WILLIAM TROY

# Drama

## And So to Bed

IMPROBABLE as it may seem, the only play of the week which has the slightest chance of enduring until this report is published is a play which deals once more with the pros and cons of marital infidelity as a sport for the leisure class. Even those who have heard dramatic debates upon this subject less often than I have will probably not learn anything new from "No More Ladies" (Booth Theater), but it would be rank ingratitude not to confess that its author, A. E. Thomas, provided a rather amusing evening in a week when amusing evenings were distinctly at a premium. He has not, alas, thought of anything new to say on his well-worn theme, and even his dialogue would probably seem pretty flat if set down coldly on the printed page, but there are nevertheless two reasons why his piece is likely to enjoy a certain success. One of them is that he has imagined a group of pleasantly differentiated types, half-real, half-mythical, and the other that the producer has collected a more than usually lively cast. First honors unquestionably go to Lucile Watson for a delightfully

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## ☐ JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH says ☐

**AH, WILDERNESS! Guild Theater. O'Neill's nostalgic comedy about a youth who discovers love and poetry together. Made doubly effective by the performance of George M. Cohan.**

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**COME OF AGE. Maxine Elliott's Theater. Clemence Dane's fantasy about the Poet Chatterton in modern London. Delicate but unsubstantial and with a fine performance by Judith Anderson.**

**DAYS WITHOUT END. Henry Miller's Theater. O'Neill's latest and much discussed play which may or may not prove that he is ready for conversion to the Catholic Church. Splendidly produced and acted, but not likely to seem very significant to those not religiously inclined.**

**MARY OF SCOTLAND. Alvin Theater. Helen Hayes and Philip Merivale give fine performances in Maxwell Anderson's play. The biggest dramatic hit of the moment but one which left me a little cold.**

**MEN IN WHITE. Broadhurst Theater. Fine teamwork on the part of the members of the Group Theater helps to make this play about a young doctor one of the things which must not be missed.**

**PEACE ON EARTH. Civic Repertory Theater. Propaganda play about the next war, in which the workers strike and a young college professor gets framed for murder. Drawing special but enthusiastic audiences which evidently do not agree with me that the play is quite uninspired.**

**THE FIRST APPLE. Ethel Barrymore Theater. Irene Purcell contributes much charm to a fragile but amusing comedy about—first apples.**

**THE GREEN BAY TREE. Cort Theater. Absorbing psychological drama about a young man who cannot give up luxury for love. Shares with "Men in White" the first place on the list of dramas.**

**THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. Avon Theater. Spicy and more or less historical comedy about a young Austrian who finds bundling one of the pleasantest of the new freedoms in Revolutionary New England.**

salty performance as the grandmother who looks like a sweet old lady but knows a hawk from a hand-saw just the same. Second to her is Rex O'Malley as an impudent bystander, and the entire cast, being first rate, so brightens up the proceedings that one frequently forgets how completely stale every situation and every theme really is.

The discouraging thing, however, is the fact that despite ten years of listening and watching I still do not know just where we stand on this all-important matter of adultery. I gather that it is almost universally practiced and that we are all agreed to abandon the more melodramatic attitudes toward it. Nevertheless, the exact status of the diversion remains imperfected defined, and I can only report a certain tendency on the part of various schools of thought to converge toward a common uncertainty. The conservative has now got around to granting that the erring husband can be forgiven on fairly easy terms, but meanwhile the school which used to celebrate the Splendid Sin has largely disappeared to make way for the sophisticate who announces in the last act that sophistication is not, after all, incompatible with a final surrender to monogamy. The result, unfortunately, is to make the plays of a defender of the conventions like Rachel Crothers almost indistinguishable from those of the most determinedly modern. No one seems willing to affirm either that infidelity is a horrible crime or that it is merely a harmless necessary diversion. Moreover, though this may be highly sensible it is not conducive to drama, and one finds it hardly worth while to see more than four or five plays a year which demonstrate merely that, all things considered, a husband and wife are probably less likely to quarrel if they keep their sex lives fairly simple. I really do not know whether Mr. Thomas is on the side of the angels or not. His libertine hero is a very nice young man with a colorful past who gets into trouble when he falls into his old habits after marriage. The final curtain descends upon his determination to be good in the future, but I am still not quite clear in my mind whether the game is to be considered worth the candle or not. Most plays on the subject seem to leave the discussion exactly where they found it, and my suggestion is that it be quietly dropped until such time as someone has discovered something new to contribute. We know that there is much to be said on both sides and we have heard it all.

Several other plays have either already closed or will be no more by the time this report is published. "John Brown" lasted two days; "And Be My Love," a frequently funny comedy also about adultery, four. The rest I have already forgotten.

Joseph Wood Krutch

## Contributors to This Issue

Low is known as "England's greatest cartoonist."

Anita Brenner, author of "Idols Behind Altars," has recently returned from a visit to Spain.

Frank Clay Cross is a Western newspaperman, and a writer and lecturer on agricultural subjects.

Paul Y. Anderson is a Washington correspondent of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*.

Alexander Kendrick is a Philadelphia newspaperman.

Douglas Haskell contributes articles on various interesting aspects of modern architecture to *The Nation* and other periodicals.

Lionel Trilling is a member of the English department of Columbia University.

Paul H. Douglas is professor of industrial relations at the University of Chicago.

Franklin Gary is a member of the English department of Princeton University.



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